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# New Theology No. 8

*Edited by*

MARTIN E. MARTY  
and DEAN G. PEERMAN

The Macmillan Company, New York, New York  
Collier-Macmillan Limited, London

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The Macmillan Company  
866 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022  
Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd., Toronto, Ontario

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 64-3132

First Printing

Printed in the United States of America

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# Theology during a Cultural Revolution

EIGHT YEARS AND eight volumes ago we who edit this series did not as yet know whether we would find enough worthwhile theological writing to fill an annual anthology. Before long those worries had been dispelled, and we were busy with the task of discerning each year which theological strand among several was most representative, which was most valid to isolate and exhibit. Theology has been changed so much that each year what looked like a new movement turned up. This year, for a time, it appeared that the pace had quickened to the extent that a semiannual series was warranted; we seemed to have two movements on our hands.

Perhaps what led us to consider chopping the year in two was our habit of looking for articles devoted to this or that "theology of." An "of-obsession" took over: after "death of God," "theology of secularity," "theology of hope," "theology of revolution," and "recovery of transcendence," it was only natural that in the course of a year's forays into the libraries our eyes would customarily fall on two more "of" phrases. During the first half of the period covered by this volume there was much talk of a "theology of play"; suddenly, however, such talk was supplanted by even more concentrated and repetitious talk about a "theology of ecology."

The impulse to prepare two volumes or to pair two apparent incompatibles in one volume was eventually resisted: this book is a report on neither a theology of play nor a theology of ecology, though decent respect is paid to both. In any event the case for each should be stated at least as a matter of record.

## I

Advocacy of a theology devoted to celebration, the "ludic," or, simply, play, was confined largely to the world of books. We did not find many journal articles on the subject; perhaps they are still to come. The pace-setting volume was Harvey Cox's *The Feast of Fools*—and Cox, who was represented in an earlier volume in this series, graces *New Theology No. 8* with words about what he sees to be at issue in his talk about celebration. Winter 1969–70 also saw the publication of Joseph C. McLelland's *The Clown and the Crocodile*, Robert E. Neale's *In Praise of Play*, David L. Miller's *Gods and Games*, and Gabriel Fackre's *Humiliation and Celebration*. News reports told of sermons devoted to the theme; then, it seemed to pass as rapidly as it had arrived.

The philosophical roots for the "play" trend lay in Johann Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* and in the work of Roger Caillois, where play is viewed as the base of cultural expression of various kinds. Catholic pioneers like Josef Pieper (in *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*) and Hugo Rahner (in *Man at Play*) had brought the philosophical analysis into the religious orbit. Corita Kent bannered these themes in her play-pop art. Perhaps the "theology of play" was simply a tardy Protestant attempt to appropriate some less than grim or prim Puritan emphases for religious witness.

Without question, the play element belongs in Christian theology. Many classic theologians saw in dramatic terms the divine-human interchange that is at the heart of the faith; Christ's resurrection, for example, was widely interpreted as a deceit, a trick played on the devil. As Cox points out, in the Middle Ages a "Feast of Fools" brought play into the calendar, and in the sphere of Latin Christianity, siesta and fiesta have had their rightful place. At a time when various social reform movements in the churches and in the world were becoming defeatist, frustrated or violent, the revival of the play note was able to help people take a new run at things. The new religiosity in our culture provided an impetus for theologians to re-inquire about liturgy—which Rahner describes as *zwecklos aber sinnvoll*, "pointless but significant."

If people learned again that there could be "signs" which were not always pointed or pragmatic but which nonetheless could bear meaning, then this theological moment was worthwhile. At the same time, there were hazards: did not the call for celebration look like "dancing on graves"? Would Cox's Christology, focusing on "Christ the Harlequin," really be able to bear the weight of Christian hope in a world marked by malignancy and pollution and meaninglessness and hate? Before long, serious (but newly "playful") Christian thinkers were ready to acknowledge that play helped provide a grace note but not a main theme.

## II

As suddenly as the theology of play came and went, discussion of ecology moved into the Jewish and Christian orbits, there to be explored just as it was in the nonreligious world. The first phase of this discussion crested on Earth Day, April 22. Seldom had the public become so quickly aware of a newly discovered sociopolitical problem; pollution and ecology were on everyone's lips. But the discussion seemed to catch the theologians off guard. Except for Frederick Elder's survey *Crisis in Eden*, there were no book-length religious studies during a season in which general books on environment were glutting the market. Some of the denominational magazines called for "a theology of ecology." And a number of conferences were held; the dominant attitude at these seemed to be one of Christian acquiescence to the charge that the Bible had helped provide a rationale for exploitation of nature ("... and have dominion over it ..."). Strangely, however, the serious theological quarterlies devoted little discussion to the subject (with the notable exception of Richard A. Underwood's essay in this volume). No doubt more is forthcoming—too late to meet our deadlines. In the meantime, readers can be guided by Kenneth P. Alpers' interpretative bibliography which is appended to this volume as Section VI and which discusses the more significant writings relating to ecology.

Theology dealing with the environment was urgently

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needed: the dichotomy between nature and history had been overdrawn by existentialist theologians, and surely Western religionists had often shared in exploitation of the earth's resources and had failed in care or stewardship of that earth. Not soon again would those who reflect on religious traditions be able to divorce man from his animal and other natural contexts. All to the good; but it would not be honest reporting to term this the year in which a theology of ecology prevailed. And by press time it became clear that another public and cultural issue, "women's liberation," was sounding the latest call for a "theology of . . ."

### III

Honest reporting—a phrase that crept into the text a few lines ago—forced us to recognize that during this past year no single trend or movement prevailed; no new star emerged; no simple plotline was discernible. Whether that is good (as the neophobes would have it) or bad (as the neophiliacs see things) is a decision we leave to the camps of those who war over the uses and abuses of tradition and innovation. So we looked instead for a motif which would encompass the new variety, the pluralism, the sense of frail beginnings, and found it in the rubric "theology during a cultural revolution."

A theology which revealed little or no consciousness of a cultural revolution would be marked by certain features which are lacking in the literature we surveyed. It would imply an acceptable world-view, a generally agreed-upon philosophy, an available consensus or tradition on which theologians could trade. The ground rules of the game would have been settled, and the importance of that game established. Little of such a sense is present in today's philosophical theology. Lonerganites (Bernard L.), Ricoeurians (Paul R.), Rahnerites (Karl R.), Tillichians (Paul J.), Whiteheadians (Alfred North) and others vie for a place, with none of their assumptions simply assumed in the churches or the larger culture.

What did and does seem to preoccupy the theologians is

precisely the sense of a disintegration of old world-views, a radical alteration in the climate of opinion, and even the possibility that a new "human nature" may be emerging. Most frequently this situation leads them to debate the possibilities of a new consciousness or a new sensibility as a cultural matrix out of which theology is to be born. The question then would be: How does the Word of God or the tradition relate to a time when people seem to be moving, as it were, from one mentally furnished apartment to another?

Signs of the cultural revolution appeared everywhere, though few were so bold as to predict its outcome. As Theodore Roszak put it, "Once a cultural disjuncture opens out in society, nothing can be guaranteed." Not all our writers express surprise over the changes; many of them had seen the death of the old cultural tradition coming, and reported almost matter-of-factly on the new situation as they saw it. Roszak again: "All revolutionary changes are unthinkable until they happen . . . and then they are understood to be inevitable."

It was unthinkable, a few years ago, that blacks would resist whites' delayed tentative invitations to become integrated; that affluent white youths would give up on the technocratic or technetronic or political or whatever society; that the technological order would give birth to a generation which wavered in its appeal to reason or repudiated "Western linear rational thinking." It was also unthinkable that the late-industrial age would give rise to body cults and the development of sensitivity; that millions would attempt to deal with reality by using forbidden drugs; that Vatican conciliar reforms would lead to the disintegration more than to the renewal of the world's largest church; that liberalism would be called into question from all sides; that secularity would be challenged by a new religiosity; that the Age of Aquarius would be heralded and that people would head off to astrologers, haruspices, soothsayers, dream-interpreters, and occultists. And so on. But all this did happen, and the turns seem to have been inevitable. Yet the extent of the "turn from" was more easily discernible than the beginnings of the

"turn toward." Theologians felt called upon to interpret the moment of the turn; some of the early results of their work are summarized under our category of theology during a cultural revolution.

#### IV

Theodore Roszak, referred to above, wrote one of the more popular interpretations, *The Making of a Counter Culture*. His book, repudiated by black and student militants, focused on the more magical-mystical side of cultural change among the young. He was less interested in military or political revolution than in alteration of sensibilities or styles of living. How could mere theologians resist commenting on a situation described so enthusiastically by nontheologian Roszak:

This . . . is the primary project of our counter culture; to proclaim a new heaven and a new earth so vast, so marvelous that the inordinate claims of technical expertise must of necessity withdraw in the presence of such splendor to a subordinate and marginal status in the lives of men. To create and broadcast such a consciousness of life entails nothing less than the willingness to open ourselves to the visionary imagination on its own demanding terms.<sup>1</sup>

Roszak defined his counterculture as "a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society that it scarcely looks to many as a culture at all, but takes on the alarming appearance of a barbaric intrusion" (p. 42). That his revolution was not the conventional liberal or Marxian version was clear from his citation, apparently with approval, of a French student's slogan: "A revolution that expects you to sacrifice yourself for it is one of daddy's revolutions." (Or, "I am a Marxist—of the Groucho variety.")

Roszak also quoted psychiatrist R. D. Laing: "We do not need theories so much as the experience that is the source of the theory." And his concurrence with Laing led him to con-

<sup>1</sup> Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1969, p. 240.

tend for a kind of Buberian pansacramentalism (play + ecology?) as a step in cultural revolution.

Almost as popular as and more comprehensive than Roszak's book was William Braden's *The Age of Aquarius*; based on wide reading and interviewing, it demonstrated that not only the disaffiliated young were bringing about drastic change. Braden also went further than Roszak in taking some hope from Christian theology—specifically, the theology of hope as a guide in cultural revolution. More explicitly theological than either of these was the work of a man who is no stranger to this series—Sam Keen, author of *To a Dancing God*.

Not for a moment would it be wise to pretend that Roszak, Braden, or Keen presented descriptions or options that were attractive to all. Conservatives could dismiss them as provincials, too captive of their own vision of cultural minorities. The violent saw the Dionysianism to which these writers pointed to be a distraction from the inevitable gun-point and bomb-blast revolution. But in the premature and partial visions of such writers there was some outlining of what countless others saw or felt in their bones or came up with as the result of historical analysis.

That Christian theologians would often welcome talk of cultural revolution or countercultures should be no surprise. "If any man is in Christ, there is a new world." "Behold, I make all things new." Adherents of a tradition of turnings, of *metanoia*, of repentance, of New Creation and New Man instinctively respond to at least some features of new cultural promise. "What is so good about what we have?" ask the bored or the victims of repression or the people of vision. Hope for the phoenix birth of some good new thing out of the ashes of the old inspires them.

No aspect of cultural revolution seems to carry more promise than does the discussion of altered consciousness. One of the first to call for an embrace of such an alteration was Leslie Dewart, who, several years ago in *The Future of Belief*, was reminding us that "we should not place any a priori limits on the level of religious consciousness to which man may easily

rise. In the future we may well learn to conceive God in a nobler way."

John Cooper, in 1969, was quite sure that we were already seeing the birth of a qualitatively different kind of human consciousness. He began his work on *The New Mentality* almost breathlessly:

A new form of consciousness is stirring within us. Rising from within ourselves, rising up from the unconscious depths, rising more ominously than ever before for things as-they-now-are. More ominously even than the specter of Communism or of slave revolt. . . .

This new way of looking at the world is no mere variant on an older philosophical mode. The reactionary critics of the young and the young-in-spirit miss the whole issue if they see the new consciousness as only the older liberalism or the old radicalism of the left come into being in contemporary dress. . . .

The bearer of this new consciousness is a new creature—perhaps the new creature foreseen by Nietzsche as the "higher man." For we are in the presence of that event which so many natural scientists (as well as theologians) have declared impossible (or at least, not yet observed): an evolutionary transformation, a new step in the phylogenetic history of man . . . [p. 9].<sup>2</sup>

Such talk from the lips of Marcuseans and other "new consciousness" folks led liberals like Sidney Hook to remind people that the same kind of talk had characterized Nazi Germany and to urge that people resist calls for development of a whole new phenotype. On a less polemical level, reporters could point to counter-counter-cultural anticultural-revolutionary trends. Was this the Age of Aquarius or the Age of Agnew? Had the old consensus really been broken? Were there not signs that more and more people were clinging to what Charles Hampden-Turner in *Radical Man* called "the formal system," whether or not its symbols were dying?

That debate is by no means settled, and it may remain unsettled for many years to come; there are too many contra-

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969.



dictory signs to be discerned and interpreted. To their credit, theologians are not waiting for the outcome but are intervening while the debate is in mid-course, while people may be "in transit" between epochs and styles. Those whose works have been collected in this volume are typical of the people who debate the pros and cons of cultural revolution and its impact on theology or vice versa.

## V

Much of the theologians' work is unsettling: few of them look for refuge in a world removed from change. Those who have little tolerance for tentativity or who rage against chaos and have a passion for instant order will be uneasy in their company. It takes no great imagination to see, however, that here and there the positive embrace of cultural-revolutionary themes carries something of the spirit of early Christian adventure. As Roszak, no believer himself, reminded his readers, the past has had its analogies to the scruffy-scummy bearers of the new in today's counterculture:

For it is written [St. Paul boasted] I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. . . . For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek wisdom. . . . But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. (I Cor. I: 19, 22, 27) [quoted in Roszak, p. 43].

Despite all the confusion, there seem to be possibilities in the moment. As Nietzsche said: "One must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star."

## VI

It has been customary in each volume of this series to preview the essays, to give the reader some sense of the plot. Even in the upheaval and unsettlement of cultural revolution we see no reason to depart from the procedure. The

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1960s represented the necessary "prerevolutionary" stages, and Sydney Ahlstrom comments on the religious and moral dimensions of these in the companion piece to Cox's tone-setting interview that has to do with the seventies. The era of the Great Society, Freedom Marches, and Vatican II now looks serene in contrast to our own time, but it was disturbing to people who had to move to that moment from the somnolent Eisenhower Era in religion.

With the stage set, it seemed important to see how people viewed the past that was being repudiated. The first of two essays in this second section is a highly personal vision of the recent past. Kathy Mulherin brings considerable passion to her picture of what life had been like for her and how far away the days of churchly and theological renewal now seem to be. Incidentally, her essay is one of a number in this book that represent different modes of theological conversation. Tandem with her piece is Robin Scrogg's lecture to a group of seminarians, in which he deals with the problems cultural revolution represents for biblical and historical faith.

As we see it, the crucial issue in cultural revolution is the question of the potential change in man's consciousness, sensibility, or world-view; the next four articles deal with these changes. Arthur Gibson's reads more easily than the others, and suggests some of the excitements in the vision of change. Then follow—you've been warned—the two most difficult statements in the book. Richard Hinners from a philosophical point of view and Richard Underwood from a focus on environment and psyche get to the heart of the matter. Readers who are less at home with philosophical discourse might want to save them until last.

This section closes with a probe by Thomas Ogletree into the question of what cultural revolution has to do with political revolution and, even more, what the whole matter has to do with our ways of conceiving, speaking of, or witnessing to God.

Fallout from the disputes that go with drastic cultural change shows up frequently in theological and religious journals, and we have sampled some issues that have served to

bring this revolution to the attention of a larger public. Preston Williams leads off Section IV with a forthright statement of the black contribution to theology in a cultural revolution. Little need be said about the high drama of what black consciousness is doing to conventional white-Western modes of perceiving reality. Next come Myron Bloy and Michael Novak with their exchange about the educational implications of the cultural revolution. In the narrow sense their articles may not be theology, but they have much to do with the climate in which theologians work. Jeanne Richie closes this section with a report on the role of women in churchly and worldly change; the suddenness with which women's change in consciousness or awakening has hit the theological world suggests to us that in a future year *New Theology* might very well be devoted to that one topic.

Few people have endeavored more strenuously than Richard Rubenstein both to face the Nothingness that stands behind some religious affirmation and to make affirmations despite the Nothingness. Included herein is his agonizing over the question of "Job and Auschwitz"—which at first glance might seem to move us far from the theology of play but on second reading is found to be well in range of it.

We thank the librarians of numerous Chicago, South Bend, St. Louis, New York and Boston schools of theology for their cooperation during our reading and research; our many friends who by now have learned to sidle up and ask, "What about so-and-so's essay for *New Theology*?"; . . . the editors of the journals, without whose cooperation we would have nothing to print; and Mrs. Joanne Younggren, who made major contributions to the correspondence and editing of the volume (without her prodding, deadlines would disintegrate and so would the annual rhythm of this series).

D.G.P. and M.E.M.

*I: From There to Here:  
The Sixties and the Seventies*

# The Radical Turn in Theology and Ethics: Why It Occurred in the 1960s

*Sydney E. Ahlstrom*

Radical theology, powerful countercultural movements, a search for new life-styles, serious dissatisfactions with traditional modes of religious expression, and widespread questioning of long-accepted views on the church, the university, and the state have put the 1960s into sharp contrast with the postwar period of affluence and religious revival. The transition has been relatively sudden—even traumatic and disruptive. Why and how did it happen? Offering an analysis of the revolutionary changes of the past decade—with special attention to theology and ethics, religious attitudes and moral standards—is Sydney E. Ahlstrom, Professor of Church History and American History and, since 1967, Chairman of the American Studies Program, Yale University. His writings include *The American Protestant Encounter with World Religions* and *Theology in America*. His essay is reprinted from the January 1970 issue of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.\*

Almost a decade ago, I contributed an essay on "Theology and the Present-Day Revival" to an issue of *The Annals* devoted to *Religion in American Society*. My assignment was to consider the main trends of serious religious thought rather than the popular postwar revival, which at that time was visibly waning. Postpublication indications were that the essay provided a reasonably accurate description of the theological situation, and five years later, it still seemed reasonable to allow a reprinting of the article without altering its basic content. But by that time, I was appalled by the word "present-day" in the title and insisted on the addition of a "Postscript,

\* 3937 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

1966.”<sup>1</sup> One was confronted by an almost classic instance of the fact that history has no future. Indeed, the ink had barely dried before that “present-day” situation began to be battered out of shape by events and forces that converged from every direction. A Roman Catholic was elected to the presidency of the United States with a tiny popular plurality—and then at the peak of his public favor was struck down and laid to rest while the nation and the world, half-stupefied by the succession of events, joined in a concert of grief such as human technology had never before made possible. In the meantime, an aged cardinal who had been elevated to the papacy in 1958 was carrying out a revolution in the Roman Catholic church whose reverberations still rumble back and forth across the Christian world with implications for the future that defy human calculation.

Nor did things stop there. On the domestic scene, the Protestant establishment received still another blow in 1962 when the Supreme Court delivered its judgment on the one man/one vote principle, and again in its 1963 ruling on the question of religious ceremonies in the public schools. Then, as if to demonstrate the revolutionary character of the nation’s deep-lying pluralism, came the great culmination of the civil rights movement at Selma, Alabama, in March 1965; and six months later, amidst the smoke and violence of the Watts riot in Los Angeles, came what we can now see as the end of the civil rights movement. Finally, as if fate were determined to make the year a turning point in history, President Lyndon Johnson authorized the bombing of North Vietnam in February 1965, and by the end of the year escalated American troop strength there to 200,000. It was now an American war in Southeast Asia.

The full significance of these several compound events will

<sup>1</sup> *Religion in American Society*, The Annals, Vol. 332 (November 1960), pp. 20–39; reprinted in *Not Many Wise: A Reader on Religion in American Society* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1962), pp. 25–47; and in Richard D. Knudten (ed.), *The Sociology of Religion: An Anthology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 5–16.

not be knowable until the end of time, but it was perfectly clear to any reasonably conscious American historian that the postwar revival had completely frittered out, that the nation was moving rapidly towards a *crise de la conscience* of unprecedented depth, and that words written in 1960 about "contemporary" theology had already become documentary material for future historians of the 1950s.<sup>2</sup>

With the passing of five more years, one can see that the waning days of the 1960s, in the mute way of all chronological periods, are making an ever stronger claim on us. The decade seems to beg remembrance for having performed a great tutelary role in the education of America, for having committed a kind of maturing violence upon the innocence of a whole people, for having called an arrogant and complacent nation to time, as it were, and for reminding it that even Mother Nature is capable of harsh dealing with her children when they desecrate her bounty. Thus, we are given good reasons for believing that the decade of the 1960s, even at the profoundest ethical and religious levels of experience, will take a distinctive place in American history.

Like many of its elegant, gay, or roaring predecessors, the decade of the 1960s will probably gain a name or two. Men will, of course, identify it with the Great Society (though not without irony) and with the Vietnam war, but adjectives like "secular" or "permissive" will probably commemorate other aspects of these ten eventful years. The decade may also be remembered for the Death of God or the Great Moral Revolution. These terms, moreover, will rest on actualities far more pervasive than, say, the gaiety of the troubled 1890s or the elegance of the 1880s. New cosmic signs *were* being read in the 1960s. The decade *did* experience a fundamental shift in American moral and religious attitudes. It is no accident

<sup>2</sup> In a parallel essay, "The Moral and Theological Revolution of the Sixties and Its Implications for American Religious Historiography," in Herbert Bass (ed.), *The State of American History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), I have sought to suggest something about the new American past which this decade has been discovering.

that phrases such as post-Puritan, post-Protestant, post-Christian, postmodern, and even posthistorical were commonly used to describe the American scene. The decade of the 1960s was a time, in short, when the old grounds of national confidence, patriotic idealism, moral traditionalism, and even of historic Judeo-Christian theism, were awash. Presuppositions that had held firm for centuries—even millennia—were being widely questioned. Some sensational manifestations have come and gone (as fads and fashions will), but the existence of a basic shift of mood rooted in deep social and institutional dislocations was anything but ephemeral. The nation was confronting revolutionary circumstances whose effects were, in the nature of the case, irreversible.<sup>3</sup>

Given this situation, I accept the traditional twofold task of historians, first to clarify the *explicandum* and second to attempt the *explicans*. What follows, therefore, is a description of the new elements in the moral, intellectual, and religious atmosphere which came to pervade America during this decade. Then will come certain suggestions which may help us to understand why this nation found itself in such revolutionary circumstances at this particular time. Much that will be said would, of course, apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to Western civilization generally or even to the whole world. This sense of global involvement is, indeed, a fundamental feature of the times. My chief focus, nevertheless, will be on the American scene, where the transition that succeeded the "postwar revival" seems to have been especially abrupt.<sup>4</sup>

Lest the reader's expectations become too exorbitant, how-

<sup>3</sup> To say that a decade's impact is irreversible is to repeat a truism, since profound experiences always leave their mark. Neo-orthodoxy, for example, could not but accept the basic demands of liberalism for "scientific" candor. Yet, many critics of current theology and ethics speak wistfully of a return to normalcy, ignore the revolutionary models of Origen, Augustine, or Calvin, and give little thought to reconstruction.

<sup>4</sup> In World War II, as in World War I, the United States escaped the total experience of war. Its postwar religious developments were correspondingly distinctive. No other nation seems to have "enjoyed" a similar revival (except possibly Canada).



ever, a caveat is in order. The truth is that phenomena of this scope could only be "explained" with a "God's-eye view" of the whole past and the whole future. Teilhard de Chardin rightly observed that "not a thing in our changing world is really understandable except insofar as it has reached its terminus." In the strict sense, our situation is historically inexplicable. We face the *mysterium tremendum*. How the 1960s would appear in some ultimate roll call of decades, therefore, is something about which we can only speculate.<sup>5</sup> Yet, we know that it has been turbulent—that it has brought excitement and liberation to some, bewilderment and pain to others. Nearly everyone has wondered at some time or other why this "almost chosen people" should have encountered so much unsettlement at just this juncture in history. In somewhat different terminology, I have, in fact, had the question put to me with equal seriousness by both student militants and members of parish church boards. (That I should state the extremes in just that way also reveals a crucial aspect of the times.) And it is my conviction that a telling of the many-stranded *histoire* that leads up to the criss-cross crisis of the 1960s can offer more assuagement to the curious than could the characteristic findings of more scientific disciplines.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Pantheisme et Christianisme* (Paris, 1923), p. 8. Arthur C. Danto makes the same point in his *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1965), chap. 1. Nobody regards it a defect in Tacitus that he missed the significance of the Christian Church for the future of the Roman Empire. Nor do we expect the impossible of present-day historians. See Marcus Cunliffe, "American Watersheds," *American Quarterly* 13 (Winter 1961).

<sup>6</sup> Historical narratives, like case histories and good excuses, can shed much light on diverse predicaments, past and present. Whether my stories are plausible is for the reader to judge. I hope he will tell me of my major shortcomings. It should be obvious from my explanations that no deprecation of the social sciences is intended, but see John Seeley on the subjectivity of "value-free" sociology, "Social Science? Some Probative Problems," in Frank Lindenfeld (ed.), *Radical Perspectives on Social Problems*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), pp. 4-13.

## Theological Radicalism

The most widely publicized aspect of the decade's religious history was the emergence of a radical movement in theology which betokened, even if it did not cause, a major reappraisal of the most assured grounds of the historic Judeo-Christian consensus. Familiar signposts can be cited. From beyond the grave, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's demand for a "secular interpretation" of biblical language was answered by a deluge of serious efforts to meet the needs of a "world come of age."<sup>7</sup> In America, it was H. Richard Niebuhr who, at the age of sixty-six, delivered the crucial inaugural address to the 1960s, with his great essay on *Radical Monotheism* (1960); but it was Gabriel Vahanian who first brought Nietzsche's famous phrase into public currency with his book on *The Death of God: The Culture of Our Post-Christian Era* (1961).<sup>8</sup> Far more noticeable, however, were three startlingly popular best sellers: Bishop J. A. T. Robinson's *Honest to God* (1963) in Great Britain, Pierre Berton's *The Comfortable Pew* (1965) in Canada, and Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* (1965) in the United States. More provocative were the works of three or four rather diverse thinkers who either proclaimed the "death of God," or insisted on an entirely "secular" interpretation of the gospel, or thoroughly "demythologized" the biblical message.<sup>9</sup> The major themes of

<sup>7</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), especially the later letters.

<sup>8</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr was by no means an isolated thinker, but between 1930 and 1960, not many thinkers tried so consistently to alter the American propensity for regarding the universe as mankind's, and especially America's, benign servant. This austerity informs his high evaluation of Jonathan Edwards and serves as a uniting theme in his entire theological corpus. See my "H. Richard Niebuhr's Place in American Thought," *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 23, no. 20, November 25, 1963.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Schubert M. Ogden, *Christ Without Myth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961); Paul Van Buren, *The Secular*

these books were, in the meantime, being popularized in the mass media—and rendered more erudite in the treatises of a wide range of writers, both lay and clerical, and of all faiths. A critical, sometimes exceedingly hostile, literature of equal proportions soon arose; yet, the “movement” has won support both at the grass roots and in halls of learning. Specific theologians aside, the trend thus marked out would have long-lasting consequences.

Contemporaneous with this development, and closely related to it, was a veritable tidal wave of questioning of all the traditional structures of Christendom, above all, the so-called “parish” church. After Peter Berger’s sounding of an early tocsin with his *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* (1961), “morphological fundamentalism” became the key word of the new critics. In the meantime, the ministry and laity alike have shown an increasingly widespread tendency to regard local church structures as irrelevant, or as extremely unadaptable to the most urgent needs of the times, or even as an impediment to social action. With cities in crisis, men accepted Gibson Winter’s diagnosis of *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (1961). Recognizing the moribund state of the old structures and traditions, Martin Marty wrote of *The Second Chance for American Protestants* (1963). This kind of critical self-examination was not being restricted to Protestants, moreover. Roman Catholics were soon involved in an equally drastic process of theological and institutional

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*Meaning of the Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963); Thomas J. Altizer and William Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966); Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966); William A. Beardslee (ed.), *America and the Future of Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967); and, as indicative of related matters, William Braden, *The Private Sea: LSD and the Search for God* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1968). A general essay on American church history which reflects this mood is William A. Clebsch, *From Sacred to Profane America: The Role of Religion in American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

reformation.<sup>10</sup> In my own city, the most trenchant statement on the problem of involving religious congregations in urban problems came from a Jewish rabbi.<sup>11</sup> Concomitantly, both the old pietistic notions of the religious life and the "high-church" liturgical movements have been deeply eroded.<sup>12</sup> Traditional forms of evangelism, both at home and on "foreign mission fields," have been seriously questioned by all but the most culturally alienated religious groups.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, in the realm of ethics and the moral life, an equally significant shift could be noted. Not only did the mass media devote much time and space to a "new morality," but even in doing so they often exploited a new permissiveness by dealing frankly with long-forbidden subjects. In schools, colleges, and universities, this "moral revolution" first took the form of opposition to the traditional doctrine that schools and colleges operate *in loco parentis*. Students demanded and received greater freedom, and then moved on, often with strong faculty support, to question the structures and value-priorities of higher education generally. Questions of

<sup>10</sup> See E. E. Y. Hales, *Pope John and His Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Image Books, 1966); Edward Wakin and Joseph F. Scheuer, *The De-Romanization of the American Catholic Church* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966); Leslie Dewart, *The Future of Belief: Theism in a World Come of Age* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966).

<sup>11</sup> Rabbi Richard Israel suggests that to ask most members of the average congregation to become involved in society's problems is to ask them to do precisely what they are trying to avoid in maintaining their membership. See his article and the responses printed in *Religion and Community Action* (November-December 1967), published by Community Progress Inc., New Haven, Connecticut. See also Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

<sup>12</sup> See Edward Farley, *Requiem for a Lost Piety* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966).

<sup>13</sup> Foreign missions are being prosecuted most vigorously by Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentacostalists, and Fundamentalists—groups that show very limited concern for contemporary intellectual dilemmas and domestic social problems. See William G. McLoughlin, "Is There a Third Force in Christendom," *Daedalus*, vol. 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967), pp. 43-68.

loyalty and obedience to constituted authority, even to the national state itself, have also been reopened with new intensity.<sup>14</sup> And, in all these cases, action has preceded or accompanied ethical reflection. Matching these popular trends, furthermore, was a distinct tendency among ethical thinkers to form less legalistic, more situational modes of guiding the moral life.<sup>15</sup> As a corollary of these developments, nearly every church body in America (as well as many in Europe, including Pope Paul VI) decided—after two thousand years!—that the time had come to appoint a commission for the re-examination, not only of sexual ethics, but also of the theological and philosophical grounds for its making any kind of moral pronouncement.

No account of the decade's radicalism, especially at the ethical level, is complete, however, unless it also takes cognizance of the ways in which a vast, and long overdue, renewal was taking place. A revolt against the hypocrisies and superficiality of conventional moral codes by no means resulted in nihilism or libertinism. Much of the violence and organized protest of the 1960s arose, basically, from moral indignation, from a deep suspicion of established institutions, and from a demand for more exalted grounds of action than social success, business profits, and national self-interest.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Most Americans were rebels in the war of 1776, as were many New Englanders in 1812 and 1846, and most Southerners in 1861; but only a small company of abolitionists and radical reconstructionists (most notably those in the train of William Lloyd Garrison) showed a disenchantment with and alienation from their own immediate culture that approximates that of the present-day protest movement. On educational ferment, see the successive issues of *Change in Higher Education* (New York).

<sup>15</sup> See Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966); Paul Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); and Harvey Cox (ed.), *The Situation Ethics Debate* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968). James M. Gustafson provides a masterful statement of the contemporary situation in Christian ethics in *Christ and the Moral Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

<sup>16</sup> Two streams of protest are ever present in the 1960s—radical militancy (chiefly black) and the student movement; they have much in common and seek common ends, but find alliances difficult to maintain, in part because of conflicting countercultural

In the realm of public affairs, indeed, it can be said that revulsion for long-accepted American priorities was most pronounced. America's patriotic "civil religion," which Will Herberg, in the mid-1950s, had quite rightly designated the basic faith of most Americans, was receiving the most searching criticism.<sup>17</sup> The old patriotic rhetoric seemed hollow and deceitful—even blasphemous. Nor was the death of this faith occurring only in youthful hearts, for superannuated congressmen were, at the same time, transforming the nation's calendar of national holy days into a convenient series of long weekends. Environmental pollution and widespread depredations of nature were undermining the power of "America the Beautiful," while the government's subordination of social and economic needs to those of war and military might was robbing "The Star-Spangled Banner" of its unifying power. Even flag-flying had become a divisive manifestation, with overtones of ironic debates on law-and-order versus social justice.<sup>18</sup>

In summary, one may safely say that many ancient modes of thinking were being altered in the 1960s. For Protestants, the layer of dogmatic asphalt with which neo-orthodoxy, during the 1930s, sought to overlay the old claims of scientific and historical investigations was cracking up. For Roman Catholics, the same fate overcame the stern condemnations of liberalism and modernism contained in the constitutions of the Vatican Council of 1869–1870 and a long series of

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aims. See Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1969).

<sup>17</sup> Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955).

<sup>18</sup> I know of no book which has adequately sounded the manifold ironies of present-day discontent, least of all the poignant circumstances that bring the brunt of radical wrath down upon the lower-middle-class ethnic groups who are most threatened by a changing social order and who, hence, move toward an alliance with the military-industrial complex. See Michael Lerner on "Respectable Pigotry," *The New Journal*, vol. 2, no. 9, April 13, 1969, pp. 5–9.

encyclicals extending from Pius IX's *Quanta cura* (1864) to Pius XII's *Humani generis* (1950). The need for deeper foundations was exposed. A credibility gap had opened up between the dominant forms of traditional theology and the secularized mind of a rapidly increasing number of educated Americans.

One must not exaggerate the depth and extent of change whenever the reference is made to a whole national population—or even to a nation's churchgoers. If common observation were not enough, there are surveys to prove that most adult Americans, though deeply troubled by the state of the nation, still hold to the religious convictions of earlier years.<sup>19</sup> Polls and questionnaires are admittedly very crude tools for measuring a thing so delicate and subjective as a human being's religious and moral commitments, but they tend to show considerable popular resistance to change. On the other hand, the declining growth rate of all the large denominations, plus their widespread budgetary problems, reveal a loss of vitality which is, in any case, affirmed in any meeting where parish clergy frankly discuss their problems. Parallel to these trends was a marked tendency among the clergy and religious (both Catholic and Protestant) to leave their churchly callings for work in the world. And among seminary students, the same tendency was noticeable. At the same time, youth of high school and college age were showing a strong sense of estrangement from traditional forms of Christian and Judaic nurture. The campus ministry, indeed, provided the earliest premonitory warnings of an institutional malaise which would mature during the course of the decade.

The three basic but closely intertwined elements that underlie this steady rise of religious antitraditionalism are profound matters of outlook; they seem to involve a deep shift in the presuppositional substructures of the American mind. One can designate them as metaphysical, moral, and social: (1) a growing attachment to a naturalism or "secularism"

<sup>19</sup> See Andrew M. Greeley, *et al.*, *What Do We Believe?: The Stance of Religion in America* (New York: Meredith Press, 1968).

that makes people suspicious of doctrines that imply anything supernatural or which seem to involve magic, superstition, or divine interventions in the natural order; (2) a creeping (or galloping) awareness of vast contradictions in American life between profession and performance, the ideal and the actual; and (3) increasing doubt concerning the capacity of present-day ecclesiastical, political, social, and educational institutions to rectify these contradictions. Rich natural resources, technological marvels, vast productive power, great ideals, expanding universities, and flourishing churches seemed to result only in a country wracked by fear, violence, racism, war, and moral hypocrisy. Nor is this simply the characterization of a few black militants and campus radicals. Similar intimations of uneasiness are voiced by a gentle old lady reading the newspaper in a nursing home and the plumber who repairs my kitchen sink.<sup>20</sup>

Yet, the question returns, Why now? Why so suddenly? Why should a moral and intellectual revolution that was centuries in the making have been precipitated in the 1960s? What happened to the religious revival? Why should the complacency of the Eisenhower years fade so swiftly? Why did shortcomings of American society that have aroused reformers ever since the eighteenth century suddenly become explosive in the 1960s? Why, in summary, have so many diverse processes dropped their bomb-load on the 1960s? It is to this complex question that the rest of this essay is addressed.

### *The Impact of Science, Relativism, and Technology*

Radical theology is fundamentally an adjustment of religious thought to an ordered understanding of the natural world that has been gaining strength at an accelerating rate for over four hundred years. The most basic element in this

<sup>20</sup> We all make our own soundings. Mine, of course, begin with colleagues and students in three diverse schools at Yale. But they stem also from membership in many civic associations and from five years of meetings with interdenominational and interregional meetings of ministers at an ecumenical institute. My relationships admittedly tend toward the less satisfied half of the population.



process is the attitude toward the physical universe typified by Galileo's telescopic discovery of the moon's rocky surface in 1610. Three centuries later, Henry Adams reflected on the great intellectual revolution that separated the Age of the Virgin of Chartres from the Age of the Dynamo. Struggling with the implications of Josiah Willard Gibbs's discoveries in physical chemistry, he became one of America's early death-of-God theologians. "The two-thousand-years' failure of Christianity roared upward from Broadway, and no Constantine the Great was in sight."<sup>21</sup>

Even more troubling was the steady advance of knowledge in the realm of "natural history," especially after the place of man in the overall scheme became a subject of intensified investigation. Until the nineteenth century, the idea of providential design had easily turned man's knowledge of the animate as well as the inanimate world to the uses of natural theology. With the rise of evolutionary theory, however, and especially after Darwin, this grand structure of apologetical theory began to crumble before the incoming tide of naturalism. A great resurgence of idealistic philosophy blunted the force of this new impulse for a time, but as the twentieth century wore on, the full force of still another long development began to be felt: the efforts of historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists to explain the behavior of man in scientific terms. Serious threats to the inerrancy of Scripture had been raised by the "Copernican revolution" which Isaac Newton had consolidated; other threats provoked the Genesis-and-Geology controversy. But these problems were mild compared to the impact of biblical criticism, the history of world religions, and developmental studies of religion and doctrine. In the churches of the United States, the crisis of relativism which these investigations portended was staved off

<sup>21</sup> *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p. 500. Adams was probably more shaken by the great Chicago World's Fair of 1893 than by philosophical trends. In the same way, the 1960's would seem to be more deeply affected by the space program and the moon landing than by developments in science and philosophy. In like manner, heart-transplants probably have more impact on popular attitudes than even the most marvelous advances in molecular biology.

by liberalism's roseate world-view, by widespread convictions as to America's glorious destiny, and by the tendency of popular evangelical revivalism to ignore the problems.<sup>22</sup> Americans were even spared the devastating blows which World War I brought down on the notion of Christendom's triumphant world role. And when the great economic collapse did finally bring this message home, the resurgent forces of fundamentalism and neo-orthodoxy—each in different ways, to separate constituencies—staved off the accounting for yet another generation. During the Eisenhower years, Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham could link hands, as it were, and preside over an Indian Summer of revivalism and confident living. Beneath the affluence and the surging religiosity, however, a vast range of unresolved issues remained. Inasmuch as these were the very years in which the mass media, notably television, were making an unprecedented impact on the popular awareness of social and intellectual change, and in which a college education was becoming an expected, or even necessary, stage in the life of every moderately ambitious American youth, the day was fast disappearing when traditional religious views would be accepted without serious questioning.<sup>23</sup>

Almost as basic to the rise of radical theology as this broad development of the modern mind was the inexorable development of what is now being referred to as modern technocratic society. Max Weber performed a great office by turning men's attention to the ways in which the Judeo-Christian world-view in general, and the Protestant Reformation in particular, accelerated the rationalization of social and economic life which underlies the rise of organized technol-

<sup>22</sup> See A. C. McGiffert's once-controversial volume, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), but also Jerry W. Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800-1870* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), and Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *The American Protestant Encounter with World Religions* (Beloit, Wis.: Beloit College, 1962). The American movement of philosophical idealism stretches from Emerson to Royce and Hocking.

<sup>23</sup> America's age of paradisaal protectedness ends as the reality of a unified global civilization enters into popular experience.

ogy.<sup>24</sup> The United States, moreover, provided a living demonstration of the fact that if unhindered by medieval notions of class and status, if animated by sufficiently powerful beliefs in the virtues of work and exploitation, and if blessed with natural resources in sufficient abundance, a "nation of immigrants" can outstrip the world in achieving technocratic maturity. Yet, given the strongly agrarian terms in which the American idea of the good life has been couched and the relentless way in which industrialism fosters the growth of cities, American history—especially during the last century—has experienced many harsh confrontations of urban and rural values. In the sectional crisis of the 1860s, again in the 1890s, and yet again in the 1920s, these value-conflicts were exceedingly severe. But Waldo Frank, in 1940, predicted their intensification in *A Chart for Rough Waters* (1940), and Roderick Seidenberg reiterated the warning a decade later in his work on *Post-Historic Man* (1950). He found "the full implications of science, technology, and the world of machinery . . . so vast as to defy . . . the possibility of sensing their ultimate meaning or their final impact upon our ways of life and thought."<sup>25</sup> Since then, technological inroads on old ways of life have steadily advanced all over the world, from Arkansas to China. Regardless of governmental forms—fascistic, communistic, or democratic—this process destroys primordial social structures. Despite protest and violence, it proceeds to make "organization men" of the entire human race, with that portion of the race living in North America feeling every major transition first.

In addition to these two worldwide trends—one intellectual, the other social—there is another major transformatory process which the United States shares with few, if any, other countries, namely, the eclipse of the Protestant establishment which presided over its early colonial life, its war for

<sup>24</sup> See Benjamin Nelson, "Conscience, Revolutions, and Weber," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 7 (Fall 1968), pp. 157–177, which cites much of the recent literature.

<sup>25</sup> Roderick Seidenberg, *Post-Historic Man* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), p. 95.

independence, and its nineteenth-century expansion. In theory, the federal union has been, from its origins, a nation of minorities and a land of freedom and equality. But, in fact, it has never been so. Radical inequality and massive forms of oppression have been features—fundamental features—of the “American way of life.” The election of the first American legislature and the first importation of African slaves took place in Virginia in 1619, and from that time forward, the rhetoric of American democracy has been falsified by the actualities of racism and bondage. Catholics were also subjected to disabilities, intolerance, and violence from the earliest times; and anti-Semitism began to grow virulent as soon as Jewish immigration began to assume large proportions in the 1880s. The American Indian has been excluded from American life from the start, and Spanish-speaking citizens, whether gained by annexation of territory or by immigration, have been consistently relegated to subordinate status. During the past century, however, the social structures, legal arrangements, values, and power relationships that supported the White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant (WASP) establishment have been gradually undermined. Immigration contributed much to this denouement, but the largest single factor in effecting the changed relationships has been the urban explosion of the twentieth century.

A final long-term factor stems from the very dominance of Puritanism in the American religious heritage. One can imagine a different turn of affairs, for example, if English authorities, in the manner of the French, Spanish, and Dutch, had kept their dissenters at home and peopled the New World colonies only with orthodox conformists. But it was not so, and the future United States was settled, and to a large degree shaped, by those who brought with them a very special form of radical Protestantism which combined a strenuous moral precisionism, a deep commitment to evangelical experientialism, and a determination to make the state responsible for the support of these moral and religious ideas. The United States became, therefore, the land par excellence of revivalism and “puritanic legalism.” It came to have a popular religious tradition that tended to be oblivious to the in-

tellectual revolutions of the modern world. In its church life, as in its forms of popular democracy, intellectualism was deprecated and repressed. Since higher education was under the control of these same forces, many of the most powerful sources of modern thinking lagged far behind those of continental Europe. And as a result of the strength of these ideas in overrepresented rural constituencies, they had a kind of illicit hold on the national life even after their actual strength had waned. The "Land of the Free," therefore, has contributed relatively little to the Western concept of academic freedom. By the mid-twentieth century, the circumstances were such that a genuinely post-Puritan situation could rapidly develop.

Yet, I can hear the reader protest that these several long-term developments do nothing to explain why the 1960s should have experienced anything more than the same gradual adjustments that befell each preceding decade. Processes that are centuries old hardly constitute a sufficient explanation for the outbreak of a revolution. And it is this objection that leads me directly to the crucial question. What precipitated so violent and sudden a moral and theological transformation in this particular decade? To satisfy such questioning, one must point to special contingencies and partly accidental convergences which together might plausibly be designated as catalytic in their effects. And this can, I think, be done.

### *Contingencies and Convergences*

What happened, I believe, is that each of the long-term processes already discussed was brought to a critical stage by the years of enormous economic expansion and rapid social change that the United States experienced, and, for the most part, thoughtlessly enjoyed, during the affluent years that followed the close of World War II. And here again the phenomenon can be subdivided for clarity's sake—by reference to five diverse but very familiar sequences.

1. The long-developing problems of rampant, unregulated

urban growth began to create environmental problems with which American political and fiscal practices could not cope. Problems of management, crime, medical care, education, sanitation, communication, housing, pollution, and transportation made American cities barely capable of sustaining the levels of existence and popular acceptance that are necessary to their viability. This situation had a timetable of its own, moreover, and crises were developing even in cities where race conflict was almost nonexistent.

2. Technological developments in agriculture and industry produced migrations of people that led the national electorate to repudiate many of those arrangements that had long maintained the Protestant establishment and the WASP ascendancy in American life. And what voters did not do, the Supreme Court accomplished. In 1961 a Roman Catholic entered the White House, while Pope John XXIII almost simultaneously began a revolution in the Roman Catholic church which brought the Counter-Reformation to an end and led to a drastic alteration of old interfaith relationships. In 1962 and 1963, respectively, the Court called for reapportionment of legislative districts on a one man/one vote principle and ended the privileged place of Christian religious ceremonies in the public schools. And, most important by far, black America, first in the context of the civil rights movement and then, after 1966, under the banner of Black Power, began to seek rectification of the historic inequalities that had featured its American circumstances.<sup>26</sup> For the first time in American history, in other words, the traumatic implications of true pluralism began to be realized. As a result of these traumas,

<sup>26</sup> This account of the rise of black militancy—from Douglass to DuBois to King to Malcolm X—is extremely foreshortened. The emergence of Black Power may, perhaps, be dated from the Meredith march from Memphis to Jackson in June 1966, but, obviously, a full account would deal with hundreds of events, domestic and international, and would certainly include the rising self-consciousness of the Third World. See Francis Broderick and August Meier (eds.), *Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965); and Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House, 1967).

radical discontent, militancy, and violence became, as never before, everyday features of American life. John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy—all of them men on whom so many pinned their hopes for a better world—were assassinated. For obvious reasons, moreover, the cities were the main focus of attention.

3. Rapid technological development and widely published advancements in science contributed another vital dimension to the national mood. Their impact was enormously increased, moreover, by sensational accomplishments that aroused the popular imagination. The successful trip to the moon, for example, capped a decade of technical triumphs, while heart-transplants dramatized progress in the study of human life. In this way, the cumulative educative effects of television and of vastly expanded enrollments at the college level were suddenly magnified. Man's technical capabilities seemed to have no conceivable bounds. Transcendent reality faded from view.

4. Less benign achievements, on the other hand, mitigated this essentially humanistic optimism. The Cuban missile crisis, continued nuclear testing, an indecisive series of attempts to achieve international control of nuclear armaments, and the proposal to construct an Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) defense system seemed to underline the tentativeness of mankind's earthly existence. Nazi extermination camps and American atomic bombs on Japan, writes Robert Jay Lifton, inaugurated a new era in human history—a time in which man is devoid of assurance of living on as a species. His "self-destructive potential" seemed to be without limit. And, in the 1960s, not only was the memory of Auschwitz and Hiroshima renewed, but their implications were interiorized. A "new history" was being shaped.<sup>27</sup>

5. And, finally, as the supreme catalyst, President Lyndon Johnson began a drastic escalation of the war in Vietnam. This not only prevented an effective assault on the nation's problems of poverty and urban dislocation, but also exposed the terrible inequities of the United States system of military conscription. When coupled with other signs that military

<sup>27</sup> Jay Robert Lifton, "Notes on a New History," *The New Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 September 28, 1969, pp. 5-9.

considerations were determining American priorities, these policies activated the student movement of dissent and led to an unprecedented loss of confidence in American institutions. With practice so far removed from principle, the entire "system" became suspect.

In this area of religion and morals, the catalytic power of these converging developments has proved to be enormous. The sharp crescendo of social strife seemed to demonstrate that the time-honored structures of American church life were "irrelevant" to the country's actual condition. To many critical observers, moreover, churchgoing America—both black and white—came to be seen, not as a moral haven in the land, but as an obstacle to change. Those who believed that the church's mission is to "save souls," and not to save society, were less disturbed by its social irrelevance; but to the mainstream of Kingdom-building, cooperative Protestantism, with its strong social-gospel orientation, the times brought profound and widespread disillusion. Yet, equally grave problems were visited on those who sought only to preach a gospel of salvation to a world of sin. Not only did the universe seem unmindful of man's plight, but man's very achievements—even the educative measures on which so much effort and money were lavished—rather suddenly began to produce an intellectual atmosphere in which traditional belief did not flourish. There seemed to be no place under the sun, or beyond the sun, for a "God who acts."<sup>28</sup>

As the decade of the 1960s drew to a close, dissension rent the country. Where one kind of moral outrage ends, another begins. The profound depths of racism are exposed. Doubts, despair, and moral confusion are endemic. One great

<sup>28</sup> That the "television generation" now coming of age and going to college in unprecedented numbers is unsatisfied by the "old-time religion" does not strike me as accidental. Moonshots, nuclear testing, discussion of an ABM defense system, and the stark possibility of human extinction drain away the vitality of traditional belief. Many "untraditional" and self-validating forms of religion have prospered, however. New votaries were won for the religions of Asia: Zen Buddhism and the transcendental meditation taught by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of Beatles fame, as



portion of the population wonders if a just society can ever be achieved; another portion feels that law-and-order are being needlessly and foolishly sacrificed. Among those "under thirty" and their many allies, a counterculture struggles to be born, with the accent on spontaneity and freedom from dogma—whether theological or social. Yet, militancy in the student movement and among the oppressed threatens to become counterproductive.

Americans, whether conservative, liberal, or radical, find it difficult or impossible to believe that the United States is any longer a beacon and blessing to the world. Even less are they prepared to understand themselves as "chosen" to suffering and servanthood. Amidst fears of genocide and the coming of a police state, a new kind of secular apocalypticism gains strength. In this context, the inducements to nihilism are powerful. Because the national scene looks hopeless, and with so many hopeful leaders prematurely in their graves, the tendency to irrational destructiveness or withdrawn communalism is very strong. In any event, the yearnings that underlie these responses and these temptations provide the ground in which radical theology sends down its roots and draws its nourishment, seeking to bring a measure of transcendence, hope, and community to those who are alienated from technocratic society generally, from the American nation-state in its present orientation, and from outworn forms of religious life and practice. The future of this theology, however, is unknown.

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well as Vedanta in various other forms. The search for wider religious horizons brought many to LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamine) and other psychedelic agents. In answer to still other needs, various types of occultism flourished, especially astrology, but also divers schools of theosophy and Rosicrucianism. The movement of Bishop James A. Pike from Episcopal neo-orthodoxy through Christian radicalism to spiritualism symbolized another prominent tendency. Sensitivity training, meanwhile, became a veritable religion itself, both within and outside of the churches. Black nationalism spurred other religious movements, most notably the Black Muslims, but also sporadic appropriations of African tradition.

## Religion in the Age of Aquarius: A Conversation with Harvey Cox and T. George Harris

Manifesting more than a merely academic interest in the theology of culture, Harvey Cox, professor at Harvard Divinity School, has been in the forefront of the rediscovery of the religious value of festivity, fantasy, and celebration. Writes T. George Harris, editor of *Psychology Today*, concerning his interview with Cox in the April 1970 issue of that journal\*: "This conversation began rather casually in an encounter group at Kairos, one of the 108 growth centers in the humanistic-psychology movement. Without rushing it, we talked for two days, renewing a friendship of several years, listening to and taking part in the blunt but caring—sometimes bitter but eventually affirming—exchanges among the 14 men and women of the group. On the third day we took a plane to Los Angeles and, with the tape recorder still patiently whirring, settled down to three pleasant hours over good food. We were still short of time to cover the remarkable odyssey of Cox. This ordained Baptist minister goes happily and openly into situations that look dangerous, or plain sinful, to most men of the cloth. . . . His writing, like his talk, combines the discipline of scholarship with the sensual chaos of personal involvement. . . . But perhaps his best things have been done off the written page: his respectful attention to black militants, an arm around the shoulder of a draft-protesting student facing a mob, his gentle humor in the nude baths of the Esalen Institute, his ruthless search for coherence in this incredible era of creation."

**T. GEORGE HARRIS:** Do you worry, as a theologian, about the general resurgence of superstition and magic? What do you do when students ask about your zodiac sign?

\* From *PSYCHOLOGY TODAY*, April 1970, © 1970 Communications/Research/Machines, Inc., Del Mar, California 92014.

HARVEY COX: You know, I hate to admit it, but they did bug me at first. When somebody would come up and say, "What's your sign?" I used to say, "I don't know. I'm not interested in that stuff." Then I got to the point where I would say in my skeptical Harvard-professor voice, "If you believe there is really some correlation between signs and character, you ought to tell me what sign I am. What sign am I?" Mine was the typical rationalistic approach: "Look at me. Ask me questions. Guess. Let's test it."

Sometimes they would play my game, but it was wrong. I now know why. Do you know what people are saying when they ask your sign? They are saying *I want to relate to you, to be intimate with you in this kooky, interesting, groovy way—a way that is going to blow the minds of those goddamned rationalists. The logical people who have organized our society have defined us into categories that we can't live in.*

Well, that's true. There's no room to move around in, to grow in, in these little boxes reserved for white people, Protestants, Jews, men, women, students, Americans, Russians, Democrats, suburbanites, New Left, rich people, poor. The whole thing is sick, and we can't do without some kind of empathy.

So along comes this absolutely weird group of categories unrelated to social status or anything else. Nobody's defining you, and you're not putting a tag on him. If you're a Taurus and I'm a Taurus, my god, immediately we've got a secret intimacy. We enter into this little conspiracy . . .

HARRIS: . . . like prisoners talking a secret slang . . .

Cox: . . . yeah, you and I have this little conspiracy going against the prison-keepers, the people who put down everything that is not scientifically demonstrable or socially presentable. So we find our own way to define ourselves.

HARRIS: I'm always afraid my sign, Libra, will be a turnoff.

Cox: Don't worry, the possibilities are unlimited. See, there are earth signs, air signs, water signs and fire signs. The air sign goes with the earth sign, and the water sign goes with the fire sign, or something like that. And there are other relationships connecting them up. If this doesn't pan out, there's

the really esoteric thing about moon signs. You could be a Capricorn born under an Aries moon. It's such an intricate and general-purpose set of symbols that you can use it to build whatever relationship you want.

The astrology trip is a form of play, of relating to each other in ways we don't have to take too seriously until we know we want to. In a broader sense, astrology and drugs and Zen are forms of play, of testing new perceptions of reality without being committed to their validity in advance—or ever.

HARRIS: That word *play* keeps cropping up. In the new book, *The Feast of Fools*, you develop a general theory of play to make a radical indictment of the work-compulsive society.

Cox: I'm not alone, of course, in feeling that in our frantic rush to affluence we have paid a high price in psychic damage. The convincing evidence is beginning to come out of psychology and anthropology. It suggests that we have almost lost, or mutilated, our gift for true festivity and celebration, for pure imagination and playful fantasy.

Two French psychologists, Roger Frétny and André Virel, began some time ago to use what they call "directed fantasy" in therapy. What I like about their work is that they related their findings to previous studies of mental imagery in anthropology and comparative religion. I think it has immeasurable importance to theology—and not just to theology. It isn't just the church but all of Western culture that has in the name of efficiency become the tribe that lost its head.

Frétny and Virel talk about four states of consciousness—imaginative, active, reflexive, and contemplative. Each has a significant function. The imaginative, of which fantasy is the best example, not only systematizes the materials of experience; it also takes apart both materials and systems in order to construct new configurations. They show how merely rational thought leaves the mind "incurably crippled in a closed and ossified system." It can only extrapolate from the past.

Persons and groups establish rhythms of movement back

and forth between the world of facts and the world of fantasies. In tribal societies the period of group fantasy corresponds to the seasonal celebrations of the myths and legends of the tribe. In more complex societies the period is not as well marked and may come less frequently. Virel and Frétigny speculate that a culture such as ours may devote obsessive attention to the fact world for centuries, then move into an era of imaginative creativity and heightened fantasy.

HARRIS: Are we headed that way now?

Cox: Maybe, though today's partial rebirth of fantasy may be a deceptive flush on the cheek of a dying age. We're overdue. We have spent the last few hundred years with our cultural attention focused dourly on the "outside" factual world—exploring, investigating and mastering it.

Those who had a penchant for fantasy never really felt at home. They were even driven out of religious institutions, the shelter where the fantasies of the mystic would normally be cherished and cultivated. Christianity, especially its Protestant versions, conned itself, and got conned, into providing the spiritual cement and stick-and-carrot values for Western industrialization. Only in the black church and in folk Catholicism such as Mexico has do you find much of Christ's festive spirit still alive.

HARRIS: And the Methodists have cut the gut-busting tunes out of the *Cokesbury Hymnal*. You have to go to a bar to sing an ecstatic hymn.

Cox: Sure. A bar certainly is one of the few places remaining where you can really let go without somebody taking you seriously. You can play.

It's my conviction that conventional religion has declined not because of the advance of science or the spread of education or any of the reasons normally advanced for secularization. The reason is simple but hard to see because it is embedded in our total environment: the tight, bureaucratic and instrumental society—the only model we've known since the industrial revolution—renders us incapable of experiencing the nonrational dimensions of existence. The absurd, the inspiring, the uncanny, the awesome, the terrifying, the ecs-

tatic—none of these fits into a production- and efficiency-oriented society. They waste time, aren't dependable. When they appear we try to ban them by force or some brand-name therapy. Having systematically stunted the Dionysian side of the whole human, we assume that man is naturally just a reliable, plane-catching Apollonian.

The blame for this distortion usually gets hung on something called "Puritanism" or the "Protestant ethic." But that analysis, I believe, is not entirely adequate. No religion yet tested seems to stand unbent by the pressure of the managerial faith known as "Economic Development." Communism, nationalism and other ideologies have gone the same route elsewhere on the globe.

HARRIS: So how does anybody see out, let alone break out?

COX: We are never completely the captives of our culture or its language. People all over the world are turning, often desperately, to the overlooked corners and freaks that were never completely systematized. Hence our fascination for pop art—and gloriously, for Fellini's films—with the junk and rejects of the industrial process. Also with the slippery stuff that never found a place in it: astrology, madness, witches, drugs, non-Western religions, palmistry and mysticism, shoddy or serious.

Even the current preoccupation with sex and violence can, to some extent, be understood in terms of this reaction. Both blood and sperm are explosive, irregular, feeling-pitched, messy and inexplicably fascinating. You can't store either one safely in the humming memory of an IBM 360, to be smoothly printed out only when needed in the program. To use a theological term, they *transcend* routine experience.

HARRIS: In *The Secular City*, which stirred up many sociologists and city planners, you argued that urban-age man has become the creator of his own world, heaven or hell, including his value system. We can't blame it on fate or God anymore. With that weight on our heads, you now urge us, in *Feast*, to go dancing in the streets.

Cox: Maybe I've learned something. Must there be a gap between those who are working and hoping for a better

world and those for whom life is affirmative, a celebration? Must the radicals and revolutionaries—the *new militants*—be at cross purposes with the *neo-mystics*—the hippies and yippies and all those who are experimenting with new styles of being? I think not, and I hope not. They are, I think, tied together.

So *Feast* is not a recantation of *Secular City*; it's an extension, a recognition that the changes we need are much more fundamental than I thought five years ago, and that the method for achieving them must be much more drastic. Man actually took charge of his own history back in the nineteenth century. In *City* I was trying to help us face that fact—defatalization—on the conscious level and work out the consequences. In *Feast* the point is that we can't handle the burden of making history if we are ourselves buried in it, unaware of the timeless dimension that we touch only in fantasy and festivity.

Have you noticed, George, how the past has become an intolerable weight? Except for conservatives who want to use the good-old-days as a club to beat everybody else with, people have a desperate impulse to destroy the past, to curse it, blow it up, burn it. That impulse explains the popularity of books like Norman O. Brown's *Life against Death* and *Love's Body*. Brown calls on us to "be ready to live instead of making history, to enjoy instead of paying back old scores and debts, and to enter that state of Being which has the goal of Becoming." He begins with Freud's view that repression is the price we pay for civilization, and he thinks the price is exorbitant. History to Brown is not just one damned thing after another; it's one big mistake. He wants to get away from it all.

More calmly, Claude Lévi-Strauss and other French structuralists suggest that we are all overcommitted to decision-making, temporal aims, and historical objectives. Lévi-Strauss argues that Jean-Paul Sartre, the philosopher of free decision and human world-making, must be left behind.

Much of music and theater seeks to immolate the past quite literally. Take John Cage, for instance. He's certainly

the most self-conscious avant-gardist in American music. He undermines the whole axiom of continuity by eliminating the idea of melody. He wants us to listen to one sound at a time, not to hear it in terms of the note that came before it.

In his theater of cruelty, Antonin Artaud invited playwrights to deal in the raw, instant aspects of existence. Lights should be selected not to enhance the play but to blister the eyes of the audience. He wanted to destroy our veneration of what had been done so that we would have to create life in our own idiom. Since Artaud, theater has been used to shock, outrage and seduce the audience out of cool spectator seats to participate in violence, magic and, at times, in joy.

HARRIS: Are you putting down such things as guerrilla theater?

COX: Hell, no. Artaud's mix of spoken and written work lights up the visionary quality of some of the student radicals, the ones who are insistently anti-ideological. Cage, on the other hand, symbolizes the mystical, Dionysiac, experience-believing portion of the present generation: the *now* mentality that is dedicated to pursuit of direct experience—erotic, visual or auditory.

There's a close connection between sensory overload and sensory deprivation. John Lilly discovered in his experiments that for a man suspended in dark silence, a tiny stimulus becomes agonizingly intense. Now go the other way. With an acid-rock band imploding you with sound and a light show chopping your eyeballs, you are totally isolated and must turn intensely inward. It's not exactly like silent contemplation, but it's one way to cut yourself off from this harried culture.

Why bother? Is there any reason for people's desperate impulse to cut out of the orderly, tense roles assigned to us? Despite the battles between Christianity and Marxism, both have tended to harness us into a sense of doing whatever history bids us do. "History" is the name we give the horizon of consciousness within which we live. It's all we see. We've lost sight of the larger environment—the cosmic phenomena open to us through intuition, awe, and ecstasy—because of



our enormous self-consciousness about the events of the past, present, and future. Michael Polanyi calls this larger reality the "tacit dimension." Teilhard de Chardin called it the "divine milieu." History is defined by time; the cosmic circle suggests eternity. To be fully human we need to be in touch with both—to apprehend, as T.S. Eliot said, the point of intersection of the timeless with time.

Gestalt psychologists and Marshall McLuhan have both pointed out the necessity for an "anti-environment," the background needed to frame anything before we can see it. If something fills our whole environment, we can't see it.

HARRIS: The fish, Marshall says, did not discover water.

Cox: Or the Age of Aquarius. Anyway, without a timeless perspective, a frame, we cannot regain the humility, the humor to see ourselves and our time honestly or the courage to act sensibly upon our insights. Otherwise we are driven to desperate attempts to "solve" everything. Richard L. Rubenstein wrote in *After Auschwitz* that the West's logical impulse toward solutions could but lead to the Nazi ovens, the "final solution."

HARRIS: Does theology have a way out?

Cox: It will, but not without a little help from its friends—the artists, the students, and the social scientists. Most of the sophisticated, critical theology being written today—and this has been true for several decades—comes out of the nineteenth-century discovery of the historically conditioned character of our tradition, of our Bible, of our encyclicals and rituals. Everything in conventional religion has become second-hand. We are allowed to feel it *only* through careful study of the people who first experienced it long, long ago.

Look, my thesis here is that the sociology of religion is posing problems that theology has to give attention to now—the problems of present experience. Theology has to go much deeper into the social sciences, which suffer from an overweening presentism but can offset the obsessional past in theology. Ever since Emile Durkheim, sociologists have been laying the base for systematic study of the nonhistoric dimension of experience, often without meaning to. I tried to

open up this prospect in *Feast*, but to go further I need to do a technical book on theology and the social sciences.

HARRIS: Marcello Truzzi at the University of Michigan has done a paper on contemporary witchcraft and Satanism, Harvey. He's positive that the upsurge is trivial because the people involved are not serious about it.

Cox: That's exactly the reason it's important—people are playing with new perceptions. It's not just the girls who join witches' covens or put on benign hexes. Arthur Waskow reports in *Liberation* on the whole range of rituals among radical groups, who at times are too serious to play in the way that I mean it. They have underground churches, exorcism, Buddhist communities, immolations, confessionals, tie-dye vestments, burn-the-money offerings, encounter groups, monastic contemplations, Indian runes, freedom Seders, commune liturgies, the whole bit. Did you ever notice how often Herbert Marcuse, whose writings gave the New Left its early base, uses the word *transcendent*? A friend of mine went through Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* underscoring each use of the word. He had marks on just about every page.

HARRIS: Irving Kristol makes a good case in *Fortune* for Marcuse's being more of a religious figure than an intellectual leader.

Cox: In many ways that's true, though I'm sure Kristol means it to be a put-down.

The search for new perceptions, however, isn't limited to radicals or neo-mystics. I noticed a while back that my students were reading—really hooked on—six books that ordinarily would not seem to have anything in common. Here they are:

*Stranger in a Strange Land*, Robert Heinlein's science fiction on the human-from-Mars. Valentine Michael Smith, the hero, could "grok," that beautiful verb for total comprehension, in a way that we earthlings have trained ourselves not to do.

*I Ching*, the "Book of Changes," or the sacred books of ancient China.

*The Double Helix*, the account of how the genetic code

was broken—by imagining pretty molecular structures and finding out which one could, by inference, be assumed to exist. Also, there were so many completely nonscientific factors—trying to beat Linus Pauling, and coping with ill-tempered Rosie, the chick in the next lab.

*The Teachings of Don Juan*, Carlos Castaneda's account of the romantic who refused to see things as practical men did, and do.

*The Politics of Experience*, psychiatrist R. D. Laing's wild, wonderful application of the theory that schizophrenia is double vision, a survival reaction.

*The Mind of the Dolphin*, John C. Lilly's research on what the comics of the sea say to each other.

These books all deal with unorthodox, often spooky ways of knowing and feeling, even with seeing things as the dolphin does.

But getting into a nonliteral mode of thought, let alone trying to write about it, is nearly impossible for many people. Remember the weekend we had a few years ago, George, at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences? Henry Murray and Talcott Parsons and Martin Marty and David Riesman—a combination of social scientists and theologians—were all sitting around the table. Remember how miffed Daniel Callahan got over the point you made about the emotional content in religion? He called you a Baptist. Well, my Baptist upbringing helps me to respect the experiential, the validity of the Dionysian. You know, Timothy Leary's wife—second wife—was once a Southern Baptist. I remember spending an evening with them on a hillside, lying under the stars up in New York State. She laughed and said to me, "We Baptists are just natural heads." Beautiful. What she meant was, you know, how could a Unitarian ever see a white flash? What liberal Congregationalist ever had a bad trip in church?

HARRIS: Getting back to behavioral studies, what did you mean about Durkheim's opening up the study of religion?

Cox: Oh, he took on very early the sociologists who wanted to get rid of religion. Religion is not a carry-over from the

age of superstition, he pointed out, because religious symbols are essential. They unify the social group. Maybe the best behavioral definition of religion is simply that it's the highest order of symbol system—the one by which other symbol systems and metaphors and myths and values of a culture are ultimately legitimatized. The clammy inanities of present church liturgy have no power to bring us together.

HARRIS: And since the religious symbols come out of man's encounter with the suprarational, we've cut ourselves off from the source of unifying values.

Cox: Yes, but to comprehend religion's place in industrial, urban society, you have to look at more than the church. In *The Invisible Religion*, Thomas Luckmann showed that the church has lost its monopoly on religious symbols. Luckmann, who is a German, is very important to me because he showed that we have been looking at far too narrow a phenomenon—the church.

Another guy who has influenced me is Robert Bellah, who teaches sociology at the University of California. Remember Bellah? He did that brilliant paper for *Daedalus* on "civil religions." Focusing on Presidential inaugurals, he caught the religious overtones and rituals in national life.

Wouldn't it be interesting to analyze The Movement as a kind of counter-civil religion emerging in America with, already, its own sacred texts: "I Have a Dream," for instance, and "Damn Americans Who Build Coffins," and a section of "Marcuse" and one on "Draft-Card Immolations." Every radical has to find symbols that are extrinsic, esoteric and have the power to keep him from being encapsulated in the existing culture.

Lloyd Warner would have done it right. He's emeritus and not completely acceptable among sociologists today. But Warner used a good methodology for the study of festivity and symbolism. First he went to central Australia among the Murngin aborigines. One of his focal points is their annual festival, the Kunapipi. You know how Warner worked, everything in excruciating detail, including the different positions of intercourse—the ritual intercourse as opposed to the

ordinary kind. Then Warner came back for his Yankee City series. In the fifth of the series, *The Symbolic Life of Americans*, he reported how Yankee City celebrated its 250th anniversary, just as he had reported the Kunapipi. He concentrated not on where symbols came from—their history—but on how they were appropriated into meaningful ritual, which is the theological problem today.

HARRIS: Sister Mary Corita—I guess she'd rather be known as artist Corita Kent—is appropriating secular symbols like bread wrappers for sacramental meaning.

Cox: Corita's enormously important. People saw her as just a cute nun, but she's the chick who saw slogans like "the Pepsi generation" and "Come alive" and "Care enough to send the best" and all that stuff in a way that would let us appropriate it. With her paintings she lets us say that man's creations, even the venial ones, are sacred.

HARRIS: Maybe the whole pop-art movement is a sacramentalizing of the environment. The artist lets us see it in a fresh way so we can laugh at it and celebrate it.

Cox: Yeah, yeah, Corita's humanizing the environment and also reminding us that the world is, as she says, unfinished. There's a new universe to create. She brings off these two master strokes at once, and she's got the love to put an ironic twist on slogans that have been used for manipulation. Wouldn't it be great if Corita would paint the cover for this issue of *Psychology Today*!

You know about the thing Corita and some of us did at that discothèque, The Boston Tea Party? We called it "An Evening with God." Everybody came, hundreds, and I started out by saying, a little lamely, "This isn't a church . . ." Somebody in the back yelled, "It is a church . . ." The ushers in beads and twenty wonderful girls in miniskirts passed out the wine and the home-baked bread. Dan Berrigan read his poems and Judy Collins sang. Corita had a rock band and strobe lights going, and pretty soon everybody was dancing in the aisles.

It worked well, maybe too well, because people keep coming back to ask when we're going to do it again. What we

want is for them to do their own celebrations, not lean on us.

Postindustrial man is rediscovering festivity. In churches all over the country there's been this eruption of multimedia masses, jazz rituals, folk and rock worship services, new art and dance liturgies. You know, there's always a John Wesley around to wonder why the Devil should have all the good things. Judson Memorial in New York and a few other churches have had "revelations," the nude dancers in psychedelic lights at the altar. Some people oppose the guitar and the leotard in church for the same reasons their forebears opposed the use of the pipe organ—it never had been done before, or so they think. Others reject the festive new liturgies as merely the latest example of the Establishment's exploitation of flashy gimmicks to lure the recalcitrant back into the fold. They've got a point. Ecclesiastical imperialism is always a threat.

What matters is that the renaissance of festivity is comprehensive, and at the moment there's far more of it outside the church than inside. That's why Corita and I used a discotheque, not a church.

We're now working on an Easter service—for April 26, the Byzantine Easter, three weeks after the regular one. We'll sing things like "Amazing Grace"; Arlo Guthrie made it an ecumenical hymn. The liturgical dancers in Boston specialize in getting everybody to participate. In the midst of the multimedia rejoicing we'll have small group interactions and meditation. And the Woodstock Eucharist, home-baked bread, and jugs. It'll start at 4 A.M. in The Boston Tea Party. At 6 A.M. the trumpets will blow for the resurrection of Christ—whatever that means to you. It's bring-your-own theology. We didn't think too many would come, but so many alienated Protestant and Jewish kids want to participate that we can't find enough things for them to do.

HARRIS: Your emphasis on sensuality blows a lot of clerical minds.

Cox: So what do we do, pretend that God created us as disembodied spirits? This is not a new question. Suspicion of the flesh has plagued Christianity off and on for most of its

history. I suspect that we've inherited a perverted form of Christianity, deodorized and afraid of smell. That's one reason I used the title *Feast of Fools*, which comes from a medieval celebration. It was not exactly prim and proper. Ordinarily pious priests and townsfolk put on bawdy masks, sang outrageous ditties and generally kept the world awake with revelry and satire. They made sport of the most sacred royal and religious practices. Of course, the feast was never popular with the higher-ups, who recognized that pure revelry is always radical. As the church became more and more worried about its authority, with running things on time, the bureaucrats managed to stamp out the feast, leaving only a memory of it in Hallowe'en and New Year's.

Our feasting is now sporadic and obsessive, our fantasies predictable and our satire politically impotent. Our celebrations do not relate us, as they once did, to the parade of cosmic history or to the great stories of man's spiritual quest. If discovering that people have bodies is one of the risks we have to take, that seems to be a small—indeed pleasant—price to pay.

HARRIS: How about the risks you've taken in antidraft demonstrations?

COX: I had to be pushed into that. The first time I heard about a guy burning a draft card I was horrified, shocked. Then about three years ago some students who had burned their cards had to go over to South Boston Courthouse for their trial. They were beaten and pummeled by a mob and the police wouldn't intervene. Next day I joined the march—you know, just demanding the right of police protection. That now seems like a long time ago. We were only about sixty people—resistance kids with beards and peace symbols and a couple of black marchers and clergy—but a mob of three hundred or four hundred came throwing rocks and fruit at us. One guy waved a sword at us with a freshly killed chicken on the point and the blood running down. He had a sense of symbolism.

When we got to the church—it was Good Friday—one of the resistance kids spoke first. He had a swollen eye from

the day before. He said the only thing he was sorry about was that the police had separated us from the mob, kept us from really having an encounter with those people. My first thought was, "This is where I leave you people—you're crazy." And my second thought was, "Something's happening here that I don't understand." He really felt warmth and regard for the people who wanted to beat him up. I started out with my speech, but I couldn't say much. It was a turning point for me.

Then came a student who was going to refuse to take the symbolic step forward in the induction center. But he didn't want it to be a dour affair. Since he was doing it to affirm life, refusing to kill, he got his girl friend to make bread and strawberry jam, and all his friends came with him, girls handing out flowers to the military and being festive. Even the people at their desks got caught in the spirit of it.

This kind of thing upsets many adults, not only because they disagree on ideas but because they think the kids are putting them on. They're afraid they're being had. What they don't understand is the whole idea of festivity and celebration.

HARRIS: You felt that way, as I recall, the first time you went to Esalen Institute.

Cox: Well, Allen Ginsberg was there talking about his masturbatory experiences and Gary Snyder was doing guru grunts. Old Jim Pike was there, troubled and outrageous as usual. He was discussing his communication with the other side. Candles and incense. I never felt more like a rigid defender of orthodoxy in my life. But they really changed my teaching style. I was pretty proud of my lecture technique, but they said, "Sit down and let's rap."

HARRIS: You're betting on the social sciences to deal with angel feathers, Harvey—things like festivity are too gossamer to inspire serious work.

Cox: No, I don't think so. Didn't you publish Jerome L. Singer's research into daydreaming?<sup>1</sup> He and John Antrobus

<sup>1</sup> Singer, "The Importance of Daydreaming," *Psychology Today*, April 1968.



discovered that fantasies are richer among what sociologists call the "marginality" people—richer among immigrant Italians and Jews, richer still among black Americans. Apparently fantasy thrives among the disfranchised. The symbolism in the black church, which, being marginal, never lost its festivity, should produce very rich possibilities. We may yet see comparative religion turn from its Protestant fixation on the texts of other faiths—surely a distorted and limiting view—to a more promising study of the whole religious ritual of a culture.

HARRIS: Where does that leave the institutional church?

COX: Some form of institutionalized religious expression is going to survive. Man is not only a religious being but a social one as well. He's not going to accept a completely do-it-yourself approach on anything this central to survival. Oh, the denominational type of Christianity headquartered in skyscrapers with branch offices in the suburbs is fated for rapid extinction, and it can't disappear too quickly for me. Yet, some form will rise out of the present resurgence of spiritual concern.

The figure of Christ is ubiquitous. He is now beginning to appear as Christ the Harlequin: the personification of celebration and fantasy in an age that has lost both. It is a truer sense of Christ than the saccharine, bloodless face we see painted so often. He was part yippie and part revolutionary, and part something else. On his day of earthly triumph, Palm Sunday, he rode to town on a jackass. One of the earliest representations of Jesus in religious art depicts a crucified figure with the head of an ass. A weak, even ridiculous church somehow peculiarly at odds with the ruling assumption of its day can once again appreciate the harlequinesque Christ.

## *II: Looking Backward: Personal and Social History*

# Memories of a (Latter-Day) Catholic Girlhood

*Kathy Mulherin*

Despite its disarming style, the article by Kathy Mulherin is likely to provide something of a jolt for older readers—especially if they happen to be Establishment religionists, and most especially if the religious establishment they are a part of happens to be Roman Catholic. Tracing her pilgrimage from convent school to the counterculture and the New Left, Mrs. Mulherin says that for her it has been a process of liberation—and that many other young Catholics have made a similar pilgrimage. Nonetheless she sees herself as having been shaped by the church, and her motivation as a radical as having roots in religious faith. A free-lance writer, Mrs. Mulherin has worked for various underground papers and news services; her autobiography will be published later this year. She and her husband, Jim—whom she describes as a “budding revolutionary”—live in a commune in the San Francisco Bay Area; both of them hope to help make “the second American Revolution.” Mrs. Mulherin’s article originally appeared in the March 6, 1970 issue of *Commonweal*.\*

*“We do not feel like a cool, swinging generation—we are eaten up by an intensity we cannot name.”*

Student speaker at Radcliffe  
graduation ceremonies in 1968

THIS ARTICLE is about the way thousands of young Catholics in my generation have moved into the New Left, the underground, the counterculture. There is a joke in New Left circles that the movement is made up of Jews

\* 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

and Catholics and a few lost Protestants. There isn't much in the way of statistical evidence to support that observation—only the McClellan Committee has membership lists—but it is pretty clear that there are disproportionate numbers of Catholics on the left. It is an extraordinary phenomenon and it is no accident.

I do not wish to speak directly about those Catholics on the left whose political activity is pointed toward Christians, who identify themselves as Catholics and Christians and who tend to define their radicalism in prophetic Christian language. They speak of their acts as witness and they speak for themselves. But there are thousands of young people who might be regarded by orthodox priests or bishops as “fallen-away” Catholics; they wryly acknowledge their Catholic roots, though now they identify first with the Movement. Three of the best known-examples are Mario Savio, Mike Klonsky (last year's SDS president), and Tom Hayden.

There are connections between the Catholic background of such people and their involvement with the Movement, or the counterculture. Those connections are deep and personal: they are part of a process unfolding on an immense scale all over the country, the world. I write about them largely from my own experience, so I cannot get it down one-two-three like a good journalist. What follows is a kind of collage, or a collection of voices. It's hard not to be confused about what has happened to us—we are not sure where we are, where we are headed. I'm hoping you'll recognize something.

And although it's Catholics I describe, I find myself frequently quoting Jews or black people who often articulate our experience more accurately.

### *The Fifties*

They say that the generation of the 1960s is activist, that the kids in the 1950s were “passive,” “uncommitted,” that it was a “square” decade, and that young people wanted noth-

ing so much as to follow the rules and to get ahead. But the generation of the 1960s was growing up in the 1950s.

*"Somebody once wrote that Eisenhower was cotton candy in the mouth of history—well—that's how I felt then, you know? Fuzz! You know, like the lining in my boots."*

LENNY HELLER, a co-founder, with David Harris, of the Resistance

Underneath the fuzz there was a deep, passionate energy. It was trapped, though, which made all of us a little crazy. Recently a young free-lance rock critic named Michael Lydon, who was raised a Catholic, tried to describe his feelings during that period. When Lydon was fifteen, his hero was Charley Starkweather, "1958's crazy-mixed-up Nebraska teenage killer," who at the age of nineteen ran away with his girl friend and shot, stabbed and beat eleven people in four days. Lydon writes:

*When I was at parochial school in the early '50s, we used to skip out of the playground at lunch time to steal cigarettes at Rosie's candy store. I remember playing out an escape drama in my mind that included turning and mowing down the nuns in the playground with a machine gun just as I was at the top of the wall ready to drop to the sidewalk on the other side. I figured it was the same for Charley. There I was, listlessly losing a battle with the forces telling me to grow up, do well, compete, accumulate, and train all eccentricity and fancy out of my mind. But out there, . . . Charley was running and blazing away, . . .*

*That era was Charley's context, . . . Even now I revel in its mannered magnificence the chopped, blocked, and dropped Mercs with dice hanging from the rear view mirrors and tassels along the back windows peeling out of the school parking lot, . . . packs of Luckies rolled up in the sleeves of muscle T-shirts, girls with kerchiefs over drying pin curls, their combs stuck through wallets bulging with pictures or down into thick white socks over black penny loafers, . . . hops in the gym, and slide stepping to get the most noise out of heel taps. It was a real culture; not empty rebellion, as*

*adults liked to say, but the defiant self-definition of kids who felt together. . . .*

*Killing really was the final thing. If adults were telling you that 'It's just a phase you'll grow out of,' you had to show them all that turmoil was for real. . . . It's hard to be patronizing to a mad-dog killer; . . .*

from *US* magazine

It was not that we were murderous, but we were hungry for experience, for real culture, something we could touch, and taste.

By the mid-1950s, Catholic and Jewish culture had been pretty thoroughly secularized and Americanized, but not entirely:

*What are we fighting for? Our souls. Isn't that a worthy cause?*

*Soul is formed from the mysterious landscapes of childhood. For me it was the paste of slush and sawdust on the floors of Avenue M butchershops, the sound of the subway, the heavy gray mass of the apartment building I lived in, its dim hallways, the elevator buttons I stood on tiptoe to reach, and the ominous superintendent who kept chasing me through the building in my nightmares.*

*Don't scoff at the soul. Don't call it imaginary. Your soul is formed from powerful doses of reality like mother's tit and favorite toy, family brawl and schoolyard fighting. Your soul is real all right, much realer than your citizenship, which is spun out of such doubtful material as history textbooks and wire service reports and television commercials.*

*Establishment politics conspires with capitalism to steal our souls away. Radical politics conspires with art to steal our souls back. . . .*

MARVIN GARSON, in the *Village Voice*

You see, alienation is too simple an idea to encompass what was going on inside of us. We reflect the people we came from. A young black woman, a poet named Nikki Giovanni, from Knoxville, Tennessee, writing about her experience as a black person, insists that the birth of the civil rights movement did not spring from the fact that there were restaurants

or schools which were segregated. The source lay much deeper, in the "base experiences," of people's lives: "Base experiences affect people; before they are born, events happen that shape their lives. My family on my grandmother's side are fighters. My family on my father's side are survivors. I'm a revolutionist. It's only logical. . . . Beliefs come, generally, through training; and training is based on feeling" (*US* magazine). And Robbie Robertson, a member of the best country rock band in America (*The Band*), told a *Time* reporter recently, "Your roots really are everything that has ever impressed you, and how much of it you can remember."

Exactly. Beliefs come through training, training is based on feeling, and feeling, or intensity, comes out of the experiences deeply impressed upon your soul.

I remember vividly the upper-class Catholic boarding-school which completely enveloped my teenage years. The school was a locked-up world of its own: within its walls flourished that baroque, European Catholicism which has been so thoroughly repudiated by the forces of renewal, and with good reason. It was authoritarian, myopically narrow, elitist, racist—a relic of another era. (Incidentally, the school was closed recently.)

But its very "irrelevance" made it a unique and wonderful gift. Over 150 girls were crowded into an old drafty estate so removed from the world that I was never aware in the whole four years I lived there that one of America's largest and ugliest black ghettos was only a few miles away. The halls were dark and chilly and we were ordered around nearly every minute of the day. Still, mysteriously, there was space and time and rich material for my energetic adolescent fantasy life. The chapel was a miniature Gothic cathedral, at once primitive and highly civilized; it seemed like a deep cave, dimly lit and full of stalactites and spires. Standing up from both ends of each pew there were two-foot-high ornamental posts, intricately carved with grapes, vines, snakes; from a certain angle they formed an elaborate totem forest, a silent army of wooden worshipers. We were encouraged to spend a lot of time in that chapel—we were kept pretty busy but I used to go in there at night and peer into the dark sanc-

tuary and my head would swim with saints and God and the sweaty little anxieties of adolescence.

Life was organized around the liturgical year—Lent was long and barren and purple; it was easy to feel the appropriate sorrow in Philadelphia's damp, gloomy winters. But the liturgical year was a source of joy too: besides the numerous saints' days and holidays provided by Holy Mother Church, the religious order which ran the school had on its own accumulated over a century of rituals, practices, and symbols—and had woven them all into the fabric of school life.

Loyalty was the key to survival in that school, and, my friends tell me, the key to survival as well for seminarians, nuns, everyone who was deeply involved in religious institutions. There were kids in my school who hated it and wanted badly to get out, to get out into the world of real people and boys and cigarettes and lipstick. They were regarded by the nuns and the rest of us as rather pathetic figures, even as traitorous if they were adamant enough; God knows they were miserable.

But if you were loyal, and I was, you could be happy. Michael Rossman once characterized the spirit of the Free Speech Movement as one of "fierce joy," born of a novel and intense communal experience. Something like the same spirit often animated the days at my convent school. In retrospect the moral and social rigidity of the place seems incredible, but at the time, our world was so complete—full, playful, momentous. A photographer once came to our school to do a photo-essay about us and after hanging around for a few days she remarked wistfully that she had rarely seen so many happy, carefree kids. She was probably aware of how much money it cost to create such a carefree situation. Many of the girls had unhappily married parents and they were relieved to be away from them. In any case, the photographer was right; we were innocent, sheltered, and the dramatic religious atmosphere lent a quality of grandeur and intensity to our lives that would have been difficult to sustain in the "outside world."

I do not wish to romanticize the place. It was a "total in-



stitution." Years later, I had to spend a couple of weeks in jail. I recognized it at once: it was like boarding school. There was no veil of illusion in jail, but the structure was the same. One day, a gentle, simple girl named Alice, jailed for heroin addiction, confided to me that she had thought jail was going to be terrible, but she'd been in and out half a dozen times and now, "I kind of like it here. It's not so bad." I nodded.

The nuns were just as deluded as we were—they really believed that they were engaged in a lively struggle for our souls. They wanted very much to produce exemplary children of the Sacred Heart, and daughters of the Church. The model was a creature of gentility and grace, of sweet humility and vigorous devotion. What they actually tended to produce was something like the Kennedy daughters (all of whom attended these schools, by the way): a devout, active young woman of the upper classes, capable of taking her place at the side (and a little to the rear) of one of the third-generation Irish or Italian Catholic young men who were just beginning to move into the higher reaches of politics and business.

Years later I discovered with great bitterness that my school and those nuns were successful in large measure because they were so brilliantly skilled in assimilating and raising the social standing of their students. Who were sent there for that purpose (myself included).

We were taught in a hundred different ways that the outside world, the secular world, was godless and inhuman (they adapted to their own uses the critique of mass culture which was so popular in those days). *But*, we were made to understand that it would be possible, even desirable, to go out into that world and work among its people, *provided* we maintained a vigilant devotion. That is, you could marry an executive of say, IBM, or Standard Oil, and mingle freely in the secular world of business and society as long as you took care to attend mass every morning, prayed a lot, did charity work (the genteel Junior League variety was considered appropriate) and raised your numerous children to be good Catholics.

In the cold light of the last dozen years such a perspective

seems hypocritical indeed, and there is no denying it.

But what was nonetheless important for me and for thousands of other Catholic kids raised in somewhat less affluent surroundings, was that the symbols were compelling and that many of the people who ruled our lives were fine, sincere, intelligent, and dedicated to their work and to us. There is no denying that either.

I wanted to be a missionary when I grew up. I learned from the nuns that it was not necessary to go off to "darkest Africa" to do that kind of work—one could develop a secular career, or a religious career in a secular context, which would serve the same purpose. I wanted to give my life to the salvation of my fellow man and I knew that in America the odds would be against me.

In fact, I was certain that there was no possibility for social change. I was deeply imbued with a sense of history as a long procession of splendor, tragedy, evil, beauty, and for all its upheaval, a certain regularity. The history of the church, we were often reminded, was not always righteous ("after all, it is a *human* institution!"), but it was for always. Salvation was a painful, plodding, absorbing, one-to-one affair. Evil, crime, sin, poverty would always be with us—though, thankfully, not *too* close to anyone *we* associated with.

### *Fools Gather*

It was this fundamental despair about the nature of change which drew me to the Myth of the Fool. At the age of nineteen or twenty my hero was Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's *Idiot*: he was gentle, epileptic, given to losing his cool in critical situations, so he never really did much good, but he was so translucently good that he moved people deeply, even if he couldn't help them in their practical agonies. He was exemplary, so tender and full of his own insignificance that those who came into contact with him found themselves on intimate terms with him. He seemed to see through everybody and to love them for what he saw. My teachers introduced me to a critical analysis which assured me that Myshkin was Dostoevsky's idea of Christ.

Many religious writers have pointed to the spirit of abandonment, or recklessness, which characterizes the true Christian: one who gives all without weighing the consequences, who is so devoted to Christ that he or she is released, liberated, made free. The implication was that anyone like that would often come into conflict with the dictates of the social order in which she or he lived. The nuns took care to curb our enthusiasm for such a life—they were not eager to unleash on the world a crowd of females wandering about half-mad with religion like medieval freaks, saints and minstrels.

You see, the point is almost too simple. Some of us were getting heady ideas about what the religious life required. Those who did not want to enter the convent began preparing for a life of ascetic poverty and dedication to the people of God. And even those who despaired of storing up the will power for such a rigorous future still hungered for the intensity that kind of life offered. Maybe *meaning* is more accurate—we wanted our lives to be full of meaning: we knew the world, by itself, could offer little, and that it would bring enormous pressure to bear on the meaning our church had given us, try to wear it down, destroy it. Outside the church others, like Camus, bore the same message: the world is absurd. And a few years later the Beatles were to write a song about a fool on a hill whom “nobody wants to know . . . / They can see that he’s just a fool.”

Please understand; we were not fanatical kids, we were pretty ordinary middle-class young men and women. By the time we were twenty-one, we knew there wasn’t a hell of a lot you could do. We had that in common with others of our generation:

*No one really believed anyone could do anything much about anything. . . . It was against this background that we began to move: not out of hope, but because we had to, because that context of Impossible granted us a weird sort of freedom. . . . freedom to be what we are, for we are all there is.*

At the same time somehow, we were also beginning to perceive that this mighty church, this backbone and fabric of our lives, was losing its grip. Even if we had been inclined to

ignore that fact, or make our own accommodation with it, the church itself was confronting it. I graduated from college in 1963. By the next fall, the Vatican Council had begun to affect me.

What the Council did for me, and for millions of others, was to legitimize the delegitimization of the church. It was that simple. The renewal was a direct attack on the moral and intellectual authority of the church, of the whole late-scholastic tradition:

*Cardinal O'Boyle was right when he said recently of the Washington dissenters [the priests who publicly opposed the church ban on artificial birth control]: "They're not testing birth control so much as the authority of the Church; it's the same sort of rebellion that is happening everywhere in the world."*

*New York Times* editorial

Right on, your excellency, right on.

Of course, the Council alone was not so powerful. Those who remained locked up in that world, those pockets, those grottoes the church had established and guarded so jealously, could ignore the Council and the twentieth century. Most of us could not.

The year 1963 saw Bull Connor's dogs tear into civil rights marchers in Birmingham, Alabama; it was the year that President Kennedy was assassinated; and the TV cameras brought it all back home. It's possible the Council might not have released us so abruptly from the myths which ruled our youth if those years had been relatively peaceful. But it was the beginning—for us—of a whole new era.

The year 1964 saw the Free Speech Movement at the University of California in Berkeley. It was not only the start of the public delegitimization of the university, but one of the birthplaces of the "counterculture." We learned from the Free Speech Movement that we had the power to *define the terms* for ourselves. FSM was communal; it was theater and politics; it was play and work. Politics and life-style interacted, each creating a context for the other.

The Vatican Council made it clear that it would no longer

do simply to obey, to follow the rules. The rules changed and the church didn't seem so certain, so *right* anymore. How, then, was one to live? The question was forced wide open. The Council also defined the relationship between man and God as horizontal, if you will: man made contact with God through other men. The notion that each man and woman made contact with God primarily individually, vertically, was dead—had been an illusion. (Inasmuch as I had suffered agonies all those years in school because I couldn't *find* God, never knew whether God knew about *me*, I was immensely relieved to come upon this discovery; I was also angry, for the energy I had poured into that search for God now seemed a waste of time and strength.)

I am not certain at this point, for each of us perceived the problem differently. I think that we sensed even before the Council that the symbols, the images which formed what Nikki Giovanni calls our "base experiences" were beginning to lose their power. If you went to a parochial school in some sooty industrial town, maybe you caught on to that long before I did. If you had to cope with the world on *its* terms it was very difficult though not impossible to avoid some hard questions about the church and its immutability. I have friends who had been exposed to the poverty and oppression of blacks and Chicanos and had been fighting the church on this score for several years before the Council—fighting and failing and despairing. They were bitterly conscious of the venality and corruption of the institution.

All I know is that none of us wanted to settle down with our disillusionment and stumble through the years like Saul Bellow's *Herzog*. I thought Herzog was a jerk, full of recriminations, self-pity, and pompous notions about the course of history and the nature of man. Not tragic, merely pathetic.

Do you understand? We were hungry for experience, for some kind of real life, for some way to tap our energy.

And what were the choices? Who were the models, the heroes? Who, what should we be? Well, look, I was sitting there in graduate school, miserable, on fire with anger at the lies and illusions I had accepted so trustingly and eagerly.

There was FSM and there that testy bunch of cardinals and bishops bickering in Rome about the future of Christianity. It took me a long time to choose, but in retrospect it seems pretty obvious.

The ironic thing was that the church had taught me that there could be no change—no real change. Now, it was the church, caught up in profound upheaval, struggling to reform itself, which showed me that change was, after all, possible. I felt a tremendous surge of energy.

But the questions raised were endless, and their implications very deep. What should we be? Who were we? Whose judgment should we trust for guidance in trying to figure out what was happening to the country and the world and ourselves? Everybody—Jews, Catholics, WASPS, nothings—everybody understood that the problem was *moral*. But what could we do? What could we expect?

*Never trust anybody over thirty.*

*Never underestimate the stupidity of the Administration.*

FSM maxims

*Once you see one truth, everything becomes clear, all the lies, the bullshit, the things they make you do you really see!*

LENNY HELLER, Resistance organizer, talking  
about the first impact of FSM on him

*Oski dolls, Pompom girls, U.C. all the way.*

*Oh, what fun it is to have your mind reduced to clay.*

*Civil rights, politics, just get in the way.*

*Questioning authority when you should obey.*

FSM Christmas carol set to "Jingle Bells"

*. . . the best among the people who enter [college] must for four years wander aimlessly much of the time questioning why they are on campus at all, doubting whether there is any point in what they are doing, and looking toward a very bleak life afterward in a game in which all of the rules have been made up, which one cannot really amend.*

*It is a bleak scene, but it is all a lot of us have to look forward to. Society provides no challenges. . . .*

*The most exciting things going on in America today are movements to change America. . . .*

Mario Savio in a speech on the steps of Sproul Hall during FSM

*Politics is the coming together of people to make decisions about their lives.*

From a SNCC leaflet in a Lowndes County organizing campaign

All this is pretty familiar now. But the most important thing about the whole experience was that the young people who took part in it *defined the terms*; and they did it by acting.

A movement of young people who defined themselves through action. It had been many years since that kind of politics had faded from the scene. It's impossible to describe how many old assumptions, methods, traditions, values, institutions, systems, were uprooted in every one of us—one could almost feel the tug of each nerve and root. When Lenny Heller said everything became clear once he saw one truth, he meant to describe a feeling: we knew we were moving to a wholly different vantage point; everything looked different but at first we couldn't see much beyond our noses.

It was a painful, step-by-step process and in the early 1960s it was again the church that taught me most of the truths other people were learning in the South and in the university. My civil rights activity, such as it was, was focused on racism in religious institutions. On that level, the church showed me much about how a system works, how bureaucracies obstruct change, how vested interests maintain their power, how stupid old men rule the lives of the young, the poor, the powerless. It was the sort of experience which made many people begin to lose their fear of the high and the mighty in authority.

I turned to the New Left because its members were really dealing with the personal, social, political, and religious problems I was facing. They were developing an analysis which helped to explain the incredible resistance to reform

in the church and the state. They were carving a life-style whose basic thrust was ethical. They were studying and fighting poverty and racism and they were trying to capture communal experience in politics. It was exciting and liberating.

And there were Catholics—theologians, priests, authority figures, if you will—who were beginning to look all over the world, everywhere, for sources of inspiration, for ways to make change and for instruction in what kind of changes to make: people like Michael Novak, Dan Callahan, Robert McAfee Brown and others. Like the young nuns, priests, seminarians who were beginning to move. I did not feel alone.

Novak more than anyone taught me that I did not have to “leave” the church to maintain my integrity. He introduced me to a wide variety of intellectual traditions and religious sources within and beyond the Catholic tradition; slowly I began to redefine my religious world view.

Occasionally, I would suddenly remember any rigorously Thomist education and wonder whether I was meandering into heresy; but the comical truth was there was nobody to excommunicate you. It was very clear that the bishops and the Curia types were too busy trying to keep the lid on to worry about me and my heresies.

It was a playful, comforting feeling to know that I did not have to leave my people to build my life. I did not want to cut my roots. It was obvious that we were going to need all the roots we had in the coming storm. Recently Novak wrote some articles in the *National Catholic Reporter* declaring that to be a Catholic is to belong to a people. Doubtless we need reminding, since the church is so torn, but when I was growing up that was my natural context; so deeply was I imbued with that truth that even now I can affirm it.

What I am getting at is complex, not entirely clear to me, difficult to dry out, separate and harden into words. Do you see that the process by which one moved from orthodox Catholicism to radicalism and the counterculture was connected by thousands of threads—some you had to break before you could move, others drew you along, led the way.



## TURNING TO THE LITURGY

Maybe one way of getting at the delicate blending of our religious tradition and this new way of life being born (Birth: breaking with the old tradition/drawing strength from it) is to turn to liturgy.

All my life the crux of liturgy, the only part that always interested me, was communion—communion and the consecration, because the moment of consecration was still, stark, full of majesty, because communion was eating God and I really dug getting *close* to God. Once in high school, a nun was showing a few of us around the chapel sacristy. To impress upon us the dramatic character of the transubstantiation, she opened a large, flat cookie tin full of unconsecrated wafers and bade us eat some. Shocked and thrilled, we reached in timidly, growing bolder as she encouraged us. In a minute we were silently grabbing handfuls and stuffing them into our mouths. The nun soon became uneasy and closed the tin. She never opened it again though we sometimes asked her to.

The consecration and communion were the most tangible moments of the religious life, but the whole liturgy was pretty tangible. A friend of mine, raised by antireligious parents in a rural California county, told me that as a kid he used to visit all the churches in town from time to time just to see what they were doing. "I thought the inside of the Catholic church must be Paradise—it was real pretty. They and all these pretty things on the altar and gold leaf on the walls and statues. It was the prettiest place in town."

The renewal movement wanted to bring the liturgy out of the encrusted tradition in which it was embedded and give it fresh life and relevance. The only trouble was that the old tradition, however irrelevant, had more soul than the feeble efforts of the liberals who dominated the renewal movement. They managed to free the liturgy for experimentation; great beauty and rich experience has come out of that, but they are caught in a transition, an almost aimless wandering. The current state of Christian liturgy expresses more poig-

nantly than anything else the profound confusion and ambivalence of Christianity today.

It was not long before the new liturgy and even the most "advanced" experiments became boring:

*What the kids really want out of liturgical experiments is novelty. They like guitars at mass and all that but if the format doesn't change all the time they get bored and stop coming.*

A Jesuit sociologist at the  
University of San Francisco

*These kids are really different now. They're more selfish. They are always trying to get us to change little regulations about hair, ties—and that's not the point. They don't care about mass—even guitar masses; only about one third of them go to mass on Sunday.*

An unhappy Dominican  
principal of a private Catholic day school for boys in Los Angeles

Nor is it just the kids. Who talks about the "underground church" now? Who can be bothered going underground just for a home mass? The underground church was not merely co-opted to reform within the church. Many of its members lost interest in it and dropped out. There was something missing: Sister Corita's celebration of Wonder Bread ignored the fact that it's terrible bread—expensive and flimsy. It was the same error that Harvey Cox made in *The Secular City*. Why celebrate something that's sick? We were exhorted to love the world—but what part of it? What was required was a critical theology: a politics.

There are thousands, perhaps millions of Catholics in this country who are waiting—still hungry for a liturgy which will invest their lives with religious import, a liturgy by which they can transform the world, celebrate what there is to celebrate and gather strength to fight what must be destroyed. They have few illusions; they are clean and dry as a desert. They wait.

But all this hasn't put an end to living liturgy. Liturgy as politics has brought off some really great experiences in the last few years.

*A demonstration is not basically a protest against anything; it is a demonstration FOR something, it is a fertility ritual, an assertion of life that demands to live in spite of the concrete environment they are trying to force on us. Then the law, which is on a Death Trip, comes out and beats people up and throws them in jail. Sandy Darlington, a rock critic writing about the Oakland 7 Trial in the San Francisco Express Times*

It is a liturgy which grows the way a politics grows: it expresses the development and the weaknesses of the participants. There are numberless examples:

- The sit-in around a police car on the Berkeley campus which sparked FSM. Michael Rossman quotes Mario Savio: "That event has always seemed to me to have the archaic primitive quality of a childhood dream."
- The first Be-In, January 14, 1967, in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, and nearly every Be-In after it. Each one openly liturgical, religious, each a joyful celebration of the life and the values we were learning to create.
- The exorcism of the Pentagon by witches and yippies at the 1967 March on the Pentagon at the end of Stop-the-Draft Week.
- "Beautiful Friday," the last day of Stop-the-Draft week in Oakland, California:

*. . . on Friday we created barricades out of cars and other available material—The barricades . . . made Oakland feel for just one day a different style and approach to the sacred symbols of modern America. We painted downtown Oakland with our anti-war slogans, showing people that in some cases political slogans are important enough to be written on walls and windows of public and private buildings. . . . We treated the private car—that crucial part of the American dream—as material for our barricades. We blocked traffic and changed the streets from thoroughfares of business into a place for people to walk, talk, argue and even dance. We felt liberated and we called our barricaded streets liberated territory.*

FRANK BARDACKE, one of the Oakland 7

Then there were the thousands of draft-card burnings all over America, the acts of sanctuary, the building of Peoples'

Park and the fight to keep it, the street fights which have erupted all over the country in white communities: kids fighting the police with shouts or rocks or water, fighting to hang onto their turf or the culture they have defined as their own.

Let the theologians define what liturgy is. Ask anyone in the Movement, in the counterculture, if he or she is religious. Few will deny it. Our liturgies celebrate us, our brotherhood, our god-likeness, the world, our visions; our liturgies confront our fears and fantasies; our liturgies all possess an inner tension of vigorous dialogue; our liturgies are relevant—paltry word in this context; our liturgies refresh us and nourish our communal bonds; they are intense and dramatic, and they are forged out of our activity.

*The family that disobeys together stays together.*

Abbie Hoffman, upon being released from jail with his wife, after Stop-the-Draft Week

*For the Hasidic Jews every gesture was potentially holy, a form of prayer, when it was made with a reverence for God. In the same way a gesture is always a form of wisdom—an act is wisdom—when it is suffused with knowledge, made with a reverence for the truth.*

PETER MARIN, in "The Open Truth and Fiery Vehemence of Youth," in *Center Magazine*

In the same article Marin talks about the human need for ritual:

*I once wrote that education through its limits denied the gods, and that they would return in the young in one form or another to haunt us. That is happening now. You can sense it as the students gather with their simplistic moral certainty, at the gates of the university. It is almost as if the young were once more possessed by Bacchanalian gods, were once again inhabited by divinities whose honor we have neglected. Those marvelous and threatening energies . . . we lack rituals for their use and balance.*

*Primitive cultures dealt with this problem, I think, through their initiation rites, the rites of passage; they legitimized and accepted these energies and turned them toward collective aims; they were merged into the life of the tribe and in this*

way acknowledged, honored, and domesticated—but not destroyed. In most initiation rites the participant is led through the mythical or sacred world (or symbolic version) and is then returned, transformed, to the secular one as a new person, with a new role. . . . He is put in touch with the sources of energy, the divinities of the tribe. In many other cultures the symbolic figures in the rites are unmasked at the end, as if to reveal to the initiate the interpenetration of the secular and sacred worlds. . . . The rites are in a sense a social contract, a binding up; one occurring specifically, profoundly, on a deep psychic level. The individual is redefined in the culture by his new relation to its mysteries, its gods, to one form or another of nature. . . . These ritualized relationships of each man to the shared gods bind the group together; they form the substance of the culture: an invisible landscape that is real and felt, commonly held, a language which resides in each man and in which, in turn, each man resides.

We are religious; we are attempting to deal with the most profound human needs and relationships, and we have had to begin almost from the beginning. So we bring to this effort everything from the past which might be useful. And you see, Catholicism, almost by virtue of the fact that it allowed itself to fall out of touch with the modern world, was dealing with those needs *on some levels* better than most institutions.

*I am a Catholic, simply, neither Orthodox, nor Roman, nor Anglican, because the Catholic Church has preserved the anthropological, the folk religion, that engendered and nourished Western civilization. These are our own rites of passage and of the year. . . . Although as a corporation it [the church] defines faith as belief and excludes the disbeliever, it can still nourish faith as life in an age of faithlessness. Religion is something men do, not something they believe.*

KENNETH REXROTH in *Commonweal*

It was on the wave of this kind of dynamic that most of us have ridden, struggled from Catholicism into the New Left.

## *Liberation*

But the process which began in the South in the late 1950s and spread to the North by the early 1960s would

make no sense if described in purely political terms, or purely collective terms. Each of us has gone through, is going through a very personal process of liberation. The counter-culture grew up out of the energies released by that process; it grew up to nourish and sustain the fragile ambitions, styles, habits we were developing.

*The only reason for being a revolutionary in our time is because it's a better way to live.*

DANNY (THE RED) COHN-BENDIT

It is impossible to say what came first, how it got started. One thing led to another, not necessarily in a linear procession. Drugs, music, funky life-styles, clothes, sex—everything affecting everything else.

Marijuana has been around for a long time. I don't know what happened to me, innocent convent girl, that when somebody I liked and trusted in California offered me a joint I smoked it. But it's easy to say why I kept smoking it. It was really nice. Drugs helped us to break down the barriers between ourselves and nature, between ourselves, between our insides and our outsides. Drugs help you to see more clearly. Anybody who has ever seen a speed freak knows that they can deepen your confusion and ruin your mind too. I don't want to get into an argument about the merits of drugs: they are all around and our culture is shot through with their influence. Drugs have also proved to the counterculture that it is religious.

But drugs were really a very small part of the process of liberation for most of us. Each of us got turned on to different kinds of experiences. I spent a lot of time in the mountains, in Big Sur, on the beach. I began to get some notions of what it means to be related, integrated into, the environment.

Rock music was very important, especially the sounds that began to come out of California in the mid-1960s. It was very good music. It was good, it was ours, and it was physical:

*. . . then, as if a signal had been given, as if the Mind had shouted to the Body, "I'm ready!"—the Twist, superseding the Hula Hoop, burst upon the scene like a nuclear explosion, sending its fallout of rhythm in the Minds and Bodies of the*

people. . . . Negroes knew something fundamental had changed.

"Man, what done got into them ofays?" one asked.

"They trying to get back," said another. . . .

"Get back?" said a girl, arching her brows quizzically,

"Get back from where?"

"From wherever they've been," said the cat, "where else?"

ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, on white people learning  
to dance, in *Soul on Ice*

The music isn't just noise and rhythm either. It is embedded deep in a dozen American musical traditions, and it is *funky*. Do you know what funky is? Funky is something that tastes good, smells good, looks a little ragged, odd, and stinks a little. Funky is a hippy dressed in an old plaid shirt of his father's, a \$40 leather vest, old, old Levi's, washed pale blue, cowboy boots, a big black hat like the Amish wear, long stringy hair and a great, thick mustache. Funky is what *Playboy* magazine is not.

. . . How I'd love to be in Berkeley right now, to roll in that mud, frolic in that sty of funky revolution, to breathe in its heady fumes, . . .

ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, *Soul on Ice*

Funky is not camp. The difference is irony, an earthly sensuality, and a certain wry nostalgia, the playful aspect of a serious search for roots. Funky is sexual.

Young Catholics are more likely to lose their virginity and their sexual illusions with one another under the stern yet oddly tolerant protection of the church. But sexual joy and freedom, that sweet intimacy, knowledge—the absorbing play of two people naked, acting naturally—that is more elusive. Jansenism sucked our young passion: sexual energies, trapped in baroque tunnels, longed to be released, to flow free.

The radical left and the counterculture, with their willingness to experiment, their natural sexuality, their hatred of guilt, was an attractive place to dig and search for the root. Those of us raised Catholic had carried our sexuality separate, hidden from ourselves in a maze we unwittingly helped to construct. The struggle to free ourselves of it has taught

us only too well how it is possible for men and women to be warped and twisted by a sick social system; it is a truth we can taste—a radical truth.

Again, it's not that simple. Catholicism was a pretty funky religion in my childhood, even more so in the periods I read about, like the Middle Ages, the Renaissance. If it was absolutist and rigid, everybody knew that Holy Mother Church could wink at sin, juggle the saints with the sinners. Eventually, I came to think of the church as a huge, wicked, rich, wise old whore.

Until I was of high school age, I lived with my family in Venezuela, where common-law marriage was a lot more common than the other kind. I remember an elderly nun stationed in a hospital run by the Maryknoll order. She used to go around visiting all the sick men she knew to be living in sin (fathers of five, ten children!) and work on their weakness. Then, once every couple of months she'd round them all up and hold a mass wedding in the tiny hospital chapel. It would be packed with mothers and fathers and children and relatives and nuns and after the wedding everybody would go down to the dining room and have a party.

See, the counterculture's sexual and moral flexibility was a great liberation, a dramatic reversal of the style of the church. But then again it was familiar.

Liberation requires concrete models; we sought heroes to show us what was possible. You see, it was *never* true what they said about not trusting anybody over thirty; that was just to serve notice that all credentials were being reviewed. From the beginning people had heroes over thirty—sometimes way over thirty, like Herbert Marcuse.

No one hero was or is expected to be everything to everyone. Often people have dozens of heroes, full of contradictory qualities. That's why people for example who are adamantly nonviolent can admire Che Guevara. I saw connections between St. John of the Cross and Albert Camus; and at the very time when I felt most alienated from the church I grew close to a middle-aged priest. I studied and imitated Mitchell Goodman, Denise Levertov, Karen and Michael Novak. One



of my heroes is four years old. Many are my own age, just ordinary good people.

We knew you couldn't build a life from ideas alone. You had to watch how other people did it. It's like learning a sport or an art; it is both sport and art. Aristotle said that. And we demand that our heroes learn from us, respect us, relate to us. Heroes are not solely authority figures, although for people in their late twenties they function that way to some degree. We after all had to break out of the world which kept us under control. Today, the whole system has lost so much authority that it has to use force, brute force to control our younger brothers and sisters. But force is not enough to repair the rent that has opened up in our culture.

*For the children. . . they sense it: there is no one over them; believable authority has disappeared; it has been replaced by experience. . . . The parents of these children, the fathers, still believe in "someone" over them, insist upon it, . . . demand it for and from their children. The children themselves cannot believe it; the idea means nothing to them. It is almost as if they are the first real Americans—suddenly free of Europe and somehow fatherless, confused, forced back on their own experience, their own sense of things, even though, at the same time, they are forced to defy their families and schools in order to keep it.*

PETER MARIN

## *Revolution*

Everyone knows there is a generation gap, but Marin points to something I've been trying to get at obliquely. Our movement, our counterculture is not ahistorical, not growing up apart from the life of the nation: it is profoundly American. It consciously seeks roots in America. If we repudiate the imperialism in "Manifest Destiny," we celebrate its sheer explosion of energy. We do not feel guilty about the Indians, we study them, imitate them, fight beside them when we can.

We are operating under the same impulse which drew the

reformers in the church back to early Christian history, made them seek to return the church to its purer roots, to purge itself of the accumulated garbage of the centuries and renew its original purpose.

Thus do reform movements try to legitimize themselves in the eyes of the people by proving that they, and not the established regime, are the true bearers of the people's hopes. Certainly, that is what we are trying unconsciously to do. But we do it in good faith, because every people which has lost its way does well to go back to its roots. Those roots are not always visible, not always recorded in the official histories, not always respectable. And the search must needs be as much instinctive as self-conscious.

*It may be that all of this chaos is a way of breaking with the old world and that from it some kind of native American will emerge.*

PETER MARIN

*A people is tough like a weed, almost ineradicable, can survive for thousands of years; but empires hatch and die off like insects.*

MARVIN GARSON, in the *Village Voice*

*WE are the people!! We ARE the people!! We are the PEOPLE!!*

The chanting reply demonstrators make to the police when the latter make announcements  
"in the name of the people of the city of New York"

A few years ago I found myself saying, in a *Commonweal* symposium, "America, I don't know you, and I don't like you." I felt pretty alienated. Today, in one sense, I'm more alienated: haunted by paranoid dreams, I awake to find reality outstripping the dream. Fred Hampton (chairman of the Chicago Black Panther Party) was murdered in his bed the other night. What was he dreaming just before he woke up? Did he wake up? Fred Hampton is my brother; I want the same things for America Fred wanted, and I believe pretty much what he did about how to get those things: revolution, armed if necessary. I have not spoken much here of the background against which all these changes occurred in our

lives; you know it well. How many lists have you seen of the multitudinous ways in which horror moves in America, the ways in which our government, our corporations, our military, exploit, plunder, kill the poor people of the world? On this level the explanations are simple: Catholics or not, we have become radicals and revolutionaries because we have been driven to it.

But today I love America, though I don't know it much more deeply; I want to, I want to dig in like a weed. The American people are my people; the Catholic people are too. I'm aware that as I move slowly, reluctantly, toward becoming a revolutionary, and a member of the revolutionary community, the memory which stands out most vividly in my head is the community of faith I was raised in, that I belonged to.

It still delights and amuses me to hear hairy, wild-looking radicals talking awkwardly about revolution in language I first heard from nuns in school, from priests in church: they speak of faith in the people, of dedication, of discipline, of hope, of the struggle we must make. Cynics will retort that we are fanatics, as the nuns and priests were. Were they? Are we?

The other day I laughed out loud to realize suddenly, with a new clarity, that to love your neighbor as yourself is revolutionary. The Catholicism I grew up interpreted that to mean that one should not love oneself at all. The process of liberation I tried to sketch straightened us out on that point. Now, as we come closer together, as we struggle to learn how to make revolution (there is only one *kind* of revolution: "The revolution is moral or not at all"—Péguy), we are beginning to discover the cost and weight, to plumb levels of desperation we never imagined and to see that coming together is so difficult that we will not do it until we have to. The only way to love your neighbors as yourself is to marry the lot of them: work together, share everything, fight together, build institutions to support yourselves, break down the barriers between you. That is the starting place of a theology, a politics.

I cannot tell you what this revolution will be like, or if

there will be one. I do not know very much about it. We want a country that has no need or desire for imperialism; a country where government is impossible unless the people are deeply involved and committed to it, where health care is free and there is no need for insurance companies, where there are no rich or poor, where the nation's industrial energy is subordinated to the needs of the land and the people, where the ecological context is the ordinary perspective, where technology releases individual energies for creative activity so fantastic we cannot imagine it, and where the social structure is rebuilt to encourage people to get together, not isolate them from one another and call it "individualism." Does all that strike you as utopian? That's the way it is in Cuba and China, hardly utopias. Does that remark strike you as false? Well, it depends on whom you believe, who controls the terms you use. Which brings us back to where we started.

One thing I know. The Catholic church and the schools I attended prepared me for this decade, for my life, no worse certainly than Harvard prepared my friends in SDS—in fact I may be a little better off. After all, I was raised an Irish Catholic; I come from a wise, mean, humorous, tough, compassionate, fierce people. My ancestors? The I.R.A. My cousins? The civil rights struggle in Northern Ireland. That's not a bad heritage for a revolutionary.

Do you see now the point of all these words? I wish to speak to you. If you feel despair, that nothing can be done here, it may not be because the situation is hopeless. It may be that you are isolated from the sources of hope, that is, isolated from the people around you, from your own situation. Have you ever tried to organize the people in your building, your block, your neighborhood? Not to sign a petition for this or that, but to get together for good, as a political unit. Have you ever worked with the Black Panthers, joined a G.E. striker's picket line, taken part in a university sit-in or the occupation of a building? I do not mean to accuse you—only to point out as concretely and gently as I can what I think isolation is. If you tell me, or if your eyes reveal you have no hope, I understand that to mean that you are isolated from your brothers and sisters. Get together.

# Tradition, Freedom, and the Abyss

*Robin Scroggs*

Robin Scroggs concurs unequivocally with those who contend that "the New Testament and the creeds are no longer in any way authoritative or canonical for us," but he is just as unequivocal in his disagreement with those who espouse the seemingly logical corollary that "the Christian today can find sufficient guidelines for his faith and action in contemporary statements and solutions." Indeed, Dr. Scroggs advances the thesis that "the survival of Christianity *qua* Christianity absolutely depends upon our taking with utmost seriousness the history of tradition even though—or perhaps better, just because—there is in it no canon." Such a thesis might at first glance seem curious, even contradictory, but New Testament scholar Scroggs argues for it with compelling cogency. Originally delivered as a convocation address at Chicago Theological Seminary, his paper was subsequently published in the May 1970 issue of the *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*.<sup>\*</sup> An associate professor at C.T.S., Dr. Scroggs is the author of *The Last Adam*.

TODAY marks an old beginning for most of us, but for the Juniors it might be said that they face a second and new beginning. Most of us are here at Chicago Theological Seminary rather than some other place because of a common conviction that if the gospel cannot be expressed in terms of human compassion in the most concrete and active way possible, it is no gospel at all. The emphasis in the Fall intensive on social concerns and the transformation or reformation of individuals and society has reinforced for the Juniors this common concern. The Fall is past, however; the new term begins, and these turned-on students are supposed

<sup>\*</sup> 5757 University Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

to get immersed in the obsolete world of the Bible, the tortuous paths of church history, and the abstract formulations of constructive theology. Is there a better, quicker way for turned-on students to be tuned-out?

This new beginning raises for the Juniors in a potentially frustrating way a very, very old problem: namely, the right relation between past tradition and present affirmation, a problem that has at various times resulted in tension and terror, as well as tremendous triumphs of imagination. There have been times when the rigidity of tradition annulled the creative processes of culture. There have been times when the inadequacy of tradition has been so strongly felt that the tradition has been essentially given up. Our time today, I suspect, is very close to the latter. What does ancient Christian tradition, with its archaic language and individualistic ethos have to do with the necessarily social and secular expression of Christianity today? What is the point any more of teaching or studying the classical disciplines when the bases for our action are given with sufficient clarity by contemporary ethics and the adjunct studies of sociology and psychology? I suspect that many of us here, if our back were against the wall, would honestly have to answer, "Very little indeed." We may have some aesthetic interest in tradition, but we are no longer in any danger of confusing aesthetic with normative judgments. There is thus probably a widespread, intuitive acceptance of two affirmations: (1) the New Testament and the creeds are no longer in any way authoritative or canonical for us; (2) the Christian today can find sufficient guidelines for his faith and action in contemporary statements and solutions.

Tonight I want to consider these affirmations under the terms of tradition and freedom, or creativity. I cannot hope to break any new ground, but, for whatever it is worth, can only bring to light my own strugglings as a scholar of one of these archaic segments of early Christianity. Perhaps you may wish to reflect further upon the problem; indeed I will consider my remarks successful if all the further we get is the acknowledgment that we have a *real* problem. I want to

agree entirely with the first affirmation and state it as sharply as I can. There is absolutely no canon, no dogmatic, ethical, or existential standard contained in any set of documents in any place in the tradition which is decisively normative for us. I want then to disagree entirely with the second affirmation and to state an alternative as sharply as I can. The survival of Christianity *qua* Christianity absolutely depends upon our taking with utmost seriousness the history of tradition even though—or perhaps better, just because—there is in it no canon.

### *There Is No Canon*

For Protestants the problem of authority has always been simpler than it has been for Roman Catholics, since the wrestling over the relations among Scripture, tradition, and the authority of the papacy was graciously denied Protestants under the dictum of *sola scriptura*. Nor is there time here to discuss the creeds; I can only claim in passing that the same kinds of questions I wish to raise about the New Testament also are relevant to a discussion about them. The Scriptures were for centuries seen as theologically true and often as historically true as well. When historical truth was denied them, it was for the Medievalist always in the interest of a greater theological affirmation (through allegory) and not, as in the Age of the Enlightenment, in the interest of the rising positivistic sense of history. But once arisen, this new sense of history and the Newtonian world-view combined to raise serious theological questions about the inspiration and truth of the Bible. History can only be interpreted from an immanent perspective and no man, however creative, can be exempted from the limitations of finiteness such as ignorance and sin. How then can any segment of history, by which is meant a human interpretation of human activities, be seen as a unique, decisive, and divine communication? This new perspective proved only the beginning. Working within this *Weltanschauung*, historians have come to judgments which,

simply from a historical perspective, make it impossible to consider the New Testament canonical in any sense.

Why do I say this? One reason lies in the history of the emergence of the canon. While tradition ascribes apostolic authorship (directly or indirectly) to all books of the New Testament, scholarship accepts as such only the basic Pauline letters, which are hardly representative of the average early Christian's thinking. The majority of the writings are by anonymous second-, third-, or later-generation Christians. That is, the apostolic authorship of the New Testament is a legend of the second-century church. Also of second-century creation is the collection itself. As is well known, this collection was formed as a counterthrust against the great threat of gnostic Christianity to orthodoxy. And here, of course, we run into the sticky question of what is orthodox. It can most simply be defined as the views of those in bureaucratic control. Thus the New Testament is a collection of books a certain group in the late second-century church made, in order to claim that original Christianity held views similar to its own. Does, however, the New Testament really tell us what the mainstream of early Christianity believed? The question was put in an acute form a number of years ago by Walter Bauer in a book called *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*. Bauer's investigations led him to argue that in many parts of the East, from Edessa to Alexandria, the earliest Christianity of which we have records was not orthodoxy but some form of gnostic Christianity. Only under the aggressive push of Roman claims did what we now call orthodoxy become dominant in the late second or third or even fourth century. While Bauer himself did not go so far, some later researchers have raised the specter that early Christianity was dominantly gnostic and not "orthodox" as the second-century Western fathers made it out to be in support of their own position. I myself doubt that the evidence Bauer marshaled can be used accurately to draw such a radical conclusion. There is, however, enough material to show that many early Christians did hold views at decided variance from those found in the New Testament. We have



to acknowledge that there is no way at present of proving that the New Testament is a repository of essential Christianity of the first century.

There is a second reason, again purely from the standpoint of the historian, which makes it impossible to affirm any canonical status to the New Testament. These books present no single set of doctrines, or kerygma, but a wide variety of differing and at times conflicting viewpoints. The more we learn about earliest Christianity and the more we are freed from a dogmatic concern to find a unity in its thinking, the more we discover how volatile the scene was in the first fifty years; opposing factions violently fought each other; at times they even attempted to read each other out of the Kingdom of God. For instance, one conflict soon arose between a Christianity which maintained the Torah and one which had set it aside. Matthew's Jesus is made to say, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. . . . Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Who are the people Jesus is made to oppose? Certainly not Jews, but Christians. It was long maintained that these sentences represented a specifically anti-Pauline statement, but the setting aside of the Torah seems to have taken place before and outside of Paul, so it is not just Paul and *his* churches which are being attacked. Matthew opposes here a growing group of Christian churches which originated probably in Syria but quickly spread westward in Asia Minor and other Mediterranean areas. A similar attack on this law-free gospel is made in another place in Matthew. "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.'" Who are these people? Again they are Christians since they call Jesus "Kyrios"; they claim their acceptance before God in the eschatological judgment on the basis of their possession of the spirit which

enables them to prophesy and to do miracles and exorcisms. But Matthew claims that these achievements are not enough; they still remain evildoers, for they have not done the will of God—and what is doing his will? In Matthew's context it is clearly obeying the law of Moses as interpreted by Jesus. The bitterness was not, however, all on one side. Paul is really the master of invective in early Christianity. He is sure his is the only gospel. He will even oppose an angel who would claim a truth different from his own. Of Christian missionaries who preach contrary to him he can say that they are servants of Satan disguised as servants of righteousness, "For even Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light." And speaking of those who wish to insist on circumcision as a necessary rite of passage into Christianity, the apostle suggests uncharitably that it would be a good idea if their knife slipped a little.

I am not simply trying to bring out the dirty linen of early Christianity, but I do think this example demonstrates the passion with which early Christians held their own conception of God's truth, and the awareness they had of real rifts in the supposedly seamless garment of apostolic Christianity. The differences were real enough and were not limited to debate over the place of the Torah in salvation. There were fights over the proper use of the Spirit, over one's attitude toward the weaker brethren, over eschatology—whether it is present, future, or nonexistent—over whether Jesus was a divine worker or the suffering Son of Man.

The conclusion so far has to be that we cannot speak of one kerygma in early Christianity, but of kerygmas, not a canon but canons. Thus, even if there were some theological justification for ascribing canonical status to the New Testament, the conclusions of the historian would put us in a hopeless position. No longer can we harmonize out of recognition the strong divergences; we must allow them to stand, and the questions are real. Is there any criterion or methodology which can overcome this impasse? Is there some way of finding a unity? If we have to remain content with canons, how do we know which one to choose?

There have been at least three different attempts made in

the last century to arrive at some firm ground on which to stand. Each has an inherent potential, but inherent weaknesses as well.

1. One approach is typified by C. H. Dodd. According to Dodd, underlying the divergences there is a real unity on essential claims. This unity is based on a *heilsgeschichtliche* scheme, in which Jesus is the turn of the eon and the believer looks to the future for the final consummation and return of Jesus, which includes a judgment based in one way or another on criteria that have to do with Jesus. Now there are, of course, *some* things which almost all the early Christians shared in common. But Dodd's scheme is too neat, and it sweeps too much under the carpet. The author of the Gospel of John has completely modified the *heilsgeschichtliche* framework, so much as to destroy it, and the question must be asked whether the real thrust of the Pauline genius wasn't also in that direction. Furthermore, is not the criterion for one's ultimate salvation a crucial aspect of the kerygma? Here, as we have already seen, diverse and contradictory answers with regard to man's responsibility were given by early Christians.

2. A second approach is chosen by Rudolf Bultmann. His canon is not anything in the New Testament at all, but is, rather, the existentialist description of authentic human existence as illuminated by Heidegger. Yet Bultmann finds this same authentic existence described in the Pauline and Johannine materials, in their descriptions of eschatological existence which are claimed as potential present realities for the believer. Bultmann, having now found this reality within Christianity, makes Paul and John into a kind of canon within the official canon, and all the other writings of early Christianity are measured against this interior canon. Since documents like Matthew, Acts, and the deutero-Pauline literature are seen to lack awareness of the eschatological reality, they are judged inferior by how much they miss the given center.

This way of dealing with the situation is truly masterful and beautifully clear. It has the advantage of bringing into

the discussion a genuine dialogue between contemporary thought and the tradition. The problem, however, is equally clear. What is the criterion for his criterion? That is, on what grounds can he legitimately allow a moment in existentialist philosophy to become normative for another system, particularly in view of the obvious fact that the *majority* opinion of early Christianity has to be seen as seriously deficient by his canon. Quantitative polling is doubtless no indicator of eternal truth, but one wonders whether Bultmann is asking too much of us when he sets aside so much of early Christianity in the name of Christianity.

3. Still a third solution might be mentioned. This is the heroic attempt to get back behind the kerygma to the historical Jesus. The ethos of this solution is something like the following. After all, the kerygmatic language is mythical, reflecting something, perhaps, of the value which the early Christians ascribed to Jesus; surely the real center of Christianity, however, is what Jesus himself taught and how he lived out this teaching in his life. Here the canon has become a historical person, as mediated by the materials in the Gospels which scholarship can claim as authentic. To have set out this view in clear perspective and to have devoted such indefatigable energy toward its working out was one of the great and creative achievements of the nineteenth century. Whatever its failures and real or imagined theological weaknesses, this view is still with us today and is likely to continue to be seen as a real option in the future. As you all know, however, this approach has not lacked its critics. In general, Christianity has centered around the kerygma, not the historical Jesus, and the Gospels themselves are primarily motivated by kerygmatic interests and in no way intend to present an accurate biography. On the one hand, it has been claimed that to seek the canon in the historical Jesus is to fail to live out of faith in the kerygma. On the other, the difficulty of really knowing with assurance what Jesus actually did and said is far more difficult than the nineteenth century thought. In any estimation, once this Jesus is uncovered, so far as is possible, the difference, at

least in language, between his message and that of the kerygma is so significant as to cause considerable consternation in quarters where identity or at least similarity is a theological necessity.

In summary so far: Apart from the undermining of the theological basis for a New Testament canon by the modern sense of history, the historian has undermined the view that the New Testament presents us with a unified, universally accepted proclamation based on the teaching of Jesus Christ, an orthodox repository of apostolic memory. Attempts to meet the historical difficulties squarely and yet to find some source of authority cannot be said to have failed, for each approach we have discussed has succeeded in some respects. But none of them has succeeded to the extent of assurance required to settle the issue. Neither from a theological nor from a historical point of view can there be the slightest hope of claiming the New Testament as canon. And what is said about the New Testament applies equally severely to all other segments of the Christian tradition, Old Testament, creeds, Protestant confessions, and so forth.

### *The Necessity of a Dialectic between Tradition and Contemporary Creativity*

For many, what I have said so far may seem like an assault on the faintest of dying echoes, like a Don Quixote attack on a rotting and decaying windmill. On the other hand, it may seem strange for such a strong denial of authority to stand juxtaposed to the second major assertion which I have made: "The survival of Christianity *qua* Christianity absolutely depends upon our taking with utmost seriousness the history of tradition." Here I affirm the importance of a knowledge of our heritage. I want to demonstrate, if I can, the necessity of our appropriation of it, but it must be the right kind of appropriation for the right uses. Thus, it was first necessary to argue against the traditional understanding of tradition, in order to clear the way toward a better realization

of what it should and can be for us in the twentieth century.

With the current surge toward creativity and freedom, it is even more important than ever before to know our tradition, because it is, I believe, becoming increasingly clear that the tradition must inform our contemporary creativity and freedom if we are to continue Christian and creative. I do not mean to suggest a one-way street in which the tradition makes decisions for us. Far from it! What I wish to see is a two-way movement, or dialectic, from creativity to the tradition, as well as from tradition to the creative moment. In this dialectic the decision-making and responsibility thereof is all ours, however much the tradition may inform the decision-making process.

#### FROM CREATIVITY TO THE TRADITION

First let me speak briefly about the movement from creativity to the tradition. The surge toward contemporary relevance unbound by dogmatic or ecclesiological hindrances is a beautiful thing. It has brought the freedom to perform what the Germans call a *Sachkritik* of any element of the tradition: that is, to have the freedom to say about the creeds that they are irrelevant or should be rejected, that Jesus' ethic is too individualistic to help today, that Paul's views about the state are essentially royalistic or even fascist. It involves a move toward the social concerns with an awareness that sociology or psychology is of more obvious usefulness than the classical Christian ethic. It means a freedom to ignore the rather single-minded asceticism in early Christian traditions in favor of an enjoyment and celebration of this world. Specifically in the sexual realm it means a rejection of the formalistic sexual taboos in favor of judgments which stem out of the quality of the relation between persons involved. It is, of course, a radical rejection of any otherworldliness. It means to have new rituals with the freedom to draw the content from any aspect of culture, to create new structures—to make everything new and pure. If those involved would

forgive me, I might even cite a biblical verse out of tradition to support this move. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old has passed away, behold the new has come."

If these innovators were asked, "By what authority do you do these things," what would be their answer? Perhaps it would be as enigmatic as Jesus' reply to the same question. Certainly one thing is clear: they are affirming their ability to know what is correct or true or useful apart from the guidance of the Christian or any other tradition. I suspect that one presupposition operating here, to what degree of consciousness I do not know, is that there is something in human nature, as we see it felt and expressed in ourselves and our culture, which lets us know where to be and what to do. Certain kinds of actions we just "know" to be right or wrong, certain stances seem inhuman, certain modes of relationship between groups instinctively are felt to be genuine and humane, others less so. I hesitate to put a label on this way of coming at reality, but it is not unrelated to a kind of natural-law theology, or, perhaps better, creational theology, which sees that, because man has a given nature, certain stances and actions are fulfilling of his nature and others less so. The affirmation of God as creator means that God's intent for man is the fulfillment of man's created nature, and thus God puts his stamp of approval upon man's search for himself and his self and communal fulfillment. And the search is possible because the potential for self-understanding is given as part of his nature. The question is not so much whether man knows what to do, but whether he has the love or freedom to do it.

I respect this self-confidence which the "new creators" have in knowing intuitively how to fulfill the nature and destiny of man. I think Jesus also had this same intuitive self-confidence. He seems to be saying that if man looks about him in the created order he ought to be able to understand what it means for God to love like a Father, and what it means for man to love as a neighbor. Furthermore, I have not the slightest doubt that the reason we have anything at

all to do with Christianity today is not that we have swallowed what Christianity has told us to believe and do, but that out of our own sense of how to live we have come to look seriously at Christianity because it seems in part at least to be saying the same thing we know to be right.

Thus even from our own independent creativity in the world, from the surge to freedom of the most radical Christian innovators, the dialogue is in fact, if very covertly, already joined. We find ourselves moving to the traditions, appropriating some of them because they seem to be saying some right things. This movement has important implications. For one, it is an acknowledgment that Christianity does in fact have something to say. For another, it suggests, probably, that even the most radical thinkers are not antitradition because of opposition to tradition in and of itself, but because they think much of it to be irrelevant; that is, they do not hear it speaking out of their sense of compassionate and authentic humanity. But so far this movement is not a real dialogue, and like any monologue is dangerous. My concern in these last few comments is to show how I feel the other side of the dialectic is useful, indeed necessary, for the sake of our creativity.

#### THE MOVEMENT FROM TRADITION TO CREATIVITY

My argument depends on the following reflections:

The best definition of Christian theology has always seemed to me to be something like the following: Christian theology is the verbal expression of the experience of the believing community. That is, it is not to be seen as an attempt to construct an abstract scheme which would cover all aspects of reality. Unlike philosophy, its sets of presuppositions are not movable. A theologian is not trying to be innovative, however contemporary his language system may be. He is trying to be true to the experience of the community which he knows from his own involvement and through hearing or reading about the involvement of others. (That is, the community mediated by the tradition may be just as, if not more,



important to him as the community he encounters on Sunday morning.)

Thus the ground or basis of theology is not man's rational or logical constructs, but a human experience. But what sort of experience? It is the experience of the community as created, challenged, molded, by the Christ event, however broadly that may be interpreted. Melanchthon's dictum may be the daddy of all modern theology: "We know Christ only through his benefits upon us." That is, I take it, saying the same thing we have already attempted to say. Theological or christological language comes out of the new existence we experience within the community. What to many has seemed like another radical statement of Bultmann is really, so far as I see, just a rephrasing of Melanchthon's word into existential categories. "Christian theology expresses the new self-understanding of the believer," or, "A statement about Christ is first of all a statement about the believer's new self-understanding." And Bultmann can take us a bit further when he equates this new self-understanding with authentic human existence. That is, the aim of God is to create or re-create human beings into people who fulfill their nature as men, who live out their lives *actually* according to the created *potential* they possess. Theology is then the attempt to express what, according to the Christian understanding, this true humanity is.

A corollary to the above is that all theological language is seen to be functional. At its best, it points to the Christian experience and the author or source of this experience; it does not point to itself. It does not claim to be the one, true, eternal statement, as if the reality was contained in the words of the language system. Thus to understand truly the meaning expressed, it is not enough to understand the words, the syntax, the logical background of the concepts. One must push through the words to the human affirmation behind them. Bultmann's program of demythologization is just one specific example and method of the inevitable translation that is necessary of every theological affirmation. One *can* say the same thing through two entirely different language

systems and we need always to be alert to this possibility. For example, what is the real difference in the understanding of Christian existence found in New Testament language and that found in creedal language? How far has Bultmann departed from Luther?

A second corollary follows. Christian theologians throughout all the centuries have been trying to do what the creative innovators are trying to do today: to express the human reality they believe to have been given them by God through the Christ event. If we think the ancient fathers were just playing games, we are wrong. The issues expressed in the traditions were hot items. When Paul is ready to anathematize an angel who preaches a different gospel; when Athanasius is willing to be banished from his home city five times for the sake of the word *homoousios*; when after the Council of Chalcedon, which under pressure from the pope and the emperor decided for "in two natures" instead of the more popular "out of two natures," the bishop of Jerusalem had to use military power to force acceptance of the decree in his city—when all these things leap at us out of the tortured history of the tradition they should signal to us that matters of human life and death (not logical order) were at stake. We today share a common enterprise and a common concern with all segments of the tradition, and this shared concern is what makes both possible and necessary the dialogue.

These are the realities which make a movement from the tradition to our creativity a crucial component in our contemporary reflections. The past addresses us, if we will but listen, out of its own understanding of Christian existence. Since the tradition is not simple, but complex, not unified but variegated, we should really expect different facts, perhaps even different understandings, of existence to be made visible in different segments of the tradition. But we need to listen to the many voices that clamor for our attention. At the cutting edge of creativity we are always in danger of running astray, of taking a path which later will prove to be wrong, of wasting valuable time exploring a possibility which was

seen to be unfruitful one thousand years ago. Worse, we may fall prey to an alien voice from the present which leads us falsely away from basic Christian human realities. We need to keep always in mind that Christianity has claimed not just any kind of human existence, but a certain kind (however much they argued over which kind was right), a particular quality, or life-style if you can still stand that cliché, a quality which it claims as truly human and possible for all men, but which it wants to set off from other qualities preferred in the world, which the tradition sees as distorted or deficient. We just do not know if our experimentations will prove authentically Christian or humane. Nor is there any sure way we can know; but we need all the advice we can get, and I would argue that the very best source is the tradition, where the Christian humanity has been lived and reflected upon. In the tradition we do find, no doubt, distorted lives and opaque reflections, and it is just here that the dialogue is joined from our side. The decisions about which claim in tradition is better, more humanly fulfilling, always remain our own responsibility. Furthermore it is probably wrong to suppose that the situations we confront, however new they may seem to be, are really new. Here again the tradition can speak to us, revealing whether such options have faced the church before, what decisions the church made then, and with what results. *We* have to decide which voice in the tradition expresses the greatest wisdom, but not to seek out that wisdom is folly of the most irresponsible sort.

But the task of understanding the tradition is not easy, especially at the level I am suggesting. It is not enough to know the chain of events, the difference on a superficial and abstract plane between an Augustine and a Pelagius. To know the tradition to the extent I am arguing is necessary requires depth studies of the most intense sort, involving us in the total culture, where ideas are seen in the context of historical movements, societal situations, economic factors, and yes, even music and art. One has to just plain dig hard, accept the discipline of learning the necessary methodologies, confront what often seems entirely strange and irrelevant

with the most serious attempts at sympathetic understanding. Anyone who is put off by Augustine's prayerful and pietistic language or by the rigorous logic of an Aquinas shows a pathetic and tragic superficiality. The strangeness or otherness of the traditions can even be an important part of our learning process. Just because it is the "Other," we ought to be more open to its difference from us, should be less likely to read into it our own biases, and therefore it may the better challenge our own self-understanding, perhaps even allow it to be judged as deficient by, *mirabile dictu*, a dusty third-century church father. Stranger things have happened to those who really listen to the voices from the past. And here the student must be warned against expecting the insight sought to come out of one reading or one course. Can one course in New Testament reveal the depths of the New Testament understanding of existence? Of course not, and the student who decides the New Testament is irrelevant after one term betrays the fact that he has not the slightest clue to what a real knowledge of a tradition involves. One could even suggest that the true test of one's commitment to freedom is his commitment to the past. Is it an accident that perhaps the greatest innovator in the history of Christianity discovered his contemporary stance out of a serious study of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles? I speak, of course, of Martin Luther.

The need for a true dialogue between past and present will thus lead to a serious study of the Christian tradition, based on the common ground of the entire tradition as an expression of Christian humanity, which in faith we proclaim as the true humanity of all men. We bring our own humanity to question the tradition, to use out of it what seems right and true. The tradition in turn questions us, asks us to reconsider, re-evaluate, to take seriously some aspect of existence we had forgotten or perhaps had been trying to avoid, and just as surely to affirm something, at least, of what we feel at the core of our being.

*The Abyss*

We are thus in no secure place. We have found no single authoritative standard from the past of what to say or how to live. Neither have we a secure self-understanding erected on the basis of our immediate experience. We in fact find ourselves in the abyss of a continual uncertainty, but we are kept from falling into chaos by the very tension between past and present. Our specific spot over the abyss is the result of our own individual dialogue. We have no assurance that where we happen to be is the best or final place to stand. And this means that the dialogue is never done, nor dare we get so rooted in any one place that we become complacent or fearful of moving. The abyss is, it is to be granted, a dangerous place, but we should not forget that in ancient symbolism the waters of chaos were also the waters of creation, out of which the gods and the world came into being. The abyss does say to us, we have no sure, abiding home, but it also gives us the challenge to find a creative stance which may speak to us and our time. Or again, a parting shot from the tradition. "Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Let me end with an extended analogy which is probably not very original, but it does draw together the threads of my argument. We find ourselves today at a crossroads. We know what our goal is, but we are not sure of the way to get there. We have not ourselves traveled this way before. Nor do we have an official AAA touring guide, nicely printed with the roads clearly marked. What we do have are a number of sketches made by people who have traveled this same area before us. Some of these maps are better drawn than others; some seem to us, judging by how far we have come, to be more inaccurately or distortedly drawn than others. Some of the maps are heavily and cleanly penciled, while others are very faint. If we are, however, to find our way, we must consult them all, looking for whatever in each

map seems to be of use in guiding us. We have to make rough-and-ready decisions about the relative usefulness of this or that portion of one map or the other. Eventually, in order to make sense out of the confusion, we sit down and draw our own map. It is a combination of features from many of the others, but as we draw, it is not quite like any single one. We are, after all is done, still not *sure* that the map we have drawn is going to get us to our goal. But we have done the best we can, and having at least that confidence, we set out on our journey.

### *III: Cultural Revolution and the Dimensions of Consciousness*

# New Heaven and New Earth

*Arthur Gibson*

The October 31, 1969 issue of the weekly magazine *Commonweal*\* was devoted to articles on a single theme: "The Church in the Year 2000." Leading off that engrossing symposium was Arthur Gibson, exponent of an evolutionary theology. As the *Commonweal* editors note in their introductory comment, Father Gibson "follows the futurologist's injunction to 'think wild.'" He expresses confident expectation of a "quantum-leap" that will come about as a consequence of technological and scientific breakthroughs; he foresees "the development of a full-fledged commerce with, and migration and settlement of, far planets that will introduce man into a new dimension." But if Father Gibson is more optimistic about the destiny of man than are the other contributors to the *Commonweal* symposium, he also raises some important questions concerning that destiny—questions which are particularly challenging to the church. Father Gibson teaches theology at St. Michael's College, Toronto. Two of his best-known writings are *The Faith of the Atheist* and *The Silence of God: A Creative Response to the Films of Ingmar Bergman*.

PORTENTS WERE READ into every event as the first Christian millennium neared its close. The talk was all about the imminent end of the world. It would be neither unexpected nor entirely banal if such omens should begin to be sensed by many in the next three decades. It can scarcely be imagined that universal history is geared exactly to either the Julian or the Gregorian calendar. But it must never be forgotten that a crucial contributory factor of the history-making of our planet is man's premonitions, previsions and the rhythms of his subconscious thrust. These lie at a far deeper

\* 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.



level than mere blueprints for the future. And the cumulative evidence of our twentieth century points imperiously toward an imminent breakthrough into a new dispensation. The moment of that breakthrough should arrive, if mankind does not falter and thwart it, sometime in the early years of the twenty-first century and certainly before the end of that century's second decade.

The signs of the times in 1969 give foundation for the expectation that the breakthrough will involve chiefly the areas of astronautics, communications and international affairs, medicine and cosmology. The breakthrough itself will be a massive coordination of the results of all the revolutionary advances scored in each individual area: it will engender what can soberly be called a new heaven and a new earth, a new mankind and a new environment.

It would be criminally shortsighted, in the very lee of these imminent events, to attempt a preview of church and world in a half-century from now which would merely project current trends into the future with no provision for a quantum-leap.

There has been a welcome creative clarification in recent years of the species of relationship existing between church and world. Vatican II entitled its message on this subject not "The Church *and* the Modern World," nor yet "The Church *to* the Modern World," but "The Church *in* the Modern World." Church and world are related as was the divine Word and his humanity. The humanity is not abrogated nor devoured by its union to the Incarnate God; but it is powered by an energy-thrust penetrating it and its space-time environment from beyond that environment.

It is perfectly legitimate to distinguish divinity and humanity in the church as in Christ and even deliberately to concentrate exclusively on the humanity. But *it is not that humanity that interacts with the world in the dimension of salvation and apotheosis.* The humanity of the church is the humanity of mankind united to the Redeeming Lord. Yet questions are still being posed about the church-world relationship which presuppose that both are exhaustively in the

same dimension (even though the church may be a privileged salvation-enclave within the wider boundaries of humanity generally). Such an approach undercuts the very salvific power of the church and creates a quite impermissible picture of church and world as wary sparring partners or rivals for general hegemony.

The church can never rival the world; the church can only divinize the successive faces of humanity or stand as a massive reproach to what cannot be divinized. Yet there is still room here for human speculation and human prevision keyed to mobilization of resources and future implementation. For even as Jesus Christ willed to operate through *his* humanity (not mankind in the generic sense but that individual nature he had united in his divine Person), so he wills to operate through the humanity of the church. But this humanity is not simply a group of the elect. It is the humanity of each age of mankind committed to the Lord. It is not the face of the church which changes in the visible shifts that cause such pother. It is the humanity of mankind that is slowly evolving and stands now before a crucial threshold.

Since, therefore, the relation of church and world is nothing less than the nexus between evolving mankind and deifying God, it is especially mandatory in a transitional age like ours that the deep long-range questions be asked in this regard, not the puttering quizzes of short-range propaganda.

What are the great lines of further evolution suggested by the long shadow of man's past and the seething focus of his present? And what must the humanity of the church do, what stance must the humanity of the church take, so that this further evolution may occur and be divinized?

The lines of development in all the areas mentioned above are converging on a clear crisis-point: mankind is approaching the moment of zoological maturity, of integral human consciousness and of earth-leavetaking.

All the millennia since the emergence of man are but a tiny interval on the cosmic chronometer. During that period, man has thought of the earth as his home or at least as his permanent bivouac from which he believed (if he was religious-minded) he would spring directly *and individually*

into a permanent habitation in the eternal abode of heaven. Yet man's instinct was sure-footed and forced him steadily through tumultuous migrations to ever new frontiers. When Alexander wept that there were no new worlds left to conquer, it was not merely a glory-mad autocrat who cried: it was man's sure instinct that the path *must* continue, that it was sheer bathos to be arrested by the treachery of a circle. Now man has almost reached the moment of the inception of a new migration; and his sound instinct urges him on; only an antievolutionary inertia threatens to hold him back.

I am not here speaking of a mere series of isolated television spectacles but of the development of a full-fledged commerce with, and migration and settlement of, far planets that will introduce man into a new dimension. The basic assignments to be resolved in the generic science of astronautics are the following: in the order of practical engineering, a new fueling concept, a new and far lighter spacecraft-design; in the order of theory, a solution of the problem created when the speed of light is accepted as the upper limit in locomotion. There are increasing indications that none of these problems is beyond the capacity of man the scientist in the very near future. The first two are problems of practical engineering which require imaginative thrust combined with massive attention to detail; and, above all, the pooling of all research resources on a global scale. The last is initially a problem in pure speculative research which will be more adequately soluble if the Einsteinian articulation is not promoted to the stultifying status of an unimpeachable dogma.

The entire weight of the church's persuasion and support must be thrown behind this effort so that mankind shall not falter. Specifically the eschatological dimension must be elongated, along the lines prophetically foreshadowed by Teilhard, to include the long voyaging through the new heavens. Above all, the stress must more and more be shifted to the eschatology of man as an integral species, with a dawning integral common consciousness. Donne's wistful poetic insight must be transformed into an invigorating positive hope.

To be sure, and in the strictest sense, every man's death diminishes men for I *am* involved in mankind. But the dawn-

ing of the common consciousness will make each death far more like the disintegration of a single cell. The great integral organism, mankind, only now arriving at self-consciousness, will continue and it is to the ultimate fate of that organism that the church must increasingly devote attention. This fate will become more consciously personalized as the self-consciousness of mankind the species grows out of its present twilight into a sharp noonday awareness. More and more the individual will realize that his own fate, temporal and eternal, is bound up with that of the species.

### *The Dawn of the Superman*

It is in this light that the arguments against the space drive derived from the need for resolution of pressing terrestrial problems seem especially shabby and specious. So long as human beings remain adamantly individualistic and draw concentric circles of merely expanded egocentricity round their individual egos (family-centricity, ethnocentricity, ideological bloc-centricity, anything short of anthropocentricity and even that still an open circle to possible new encounters with other created intelligences, whether carbon-based or not), so long will every effort to resolve questions of justice and still more pressing questions of living identification and love creep forward at a snail's pace to be fatally outdistanced by the gathering tensions.

Surely nothing could be more calculated to ensure precisely this universal identification with the species than the interpolation of a new dimension, the outward thrust of space. For it must not be forgotten that the tensions riddling the unity of the species at the moment are not entirely the result of sluggishness of heart. Partly these tensions result from a not entirely unfounded fear that the population explosion will ultimately exhaust, not so much and not in the first instance the material resources (though that, too, might come with alarming swiftness, say some analysts), but pre-eminently the psychic breathing-space, that one day that baby will be born who will produce fatally exasperating

crowding (just as it is said that the one automobile will appear on the streets of Megalopolis which will create an insoluble traffic jam).

It might seem at a casual glance that not even the space drive would be capable of uniting mankind even into reasonable cooperative neighborliness, let alone into the almost unimaginable organic unity delineated above. Yet solid signs and symptoms point to the imminent possibility of such a revolutionary event. The communications revolutions of the last fifty years have done much more than simply to make news available everywhere virtually instantaneously—itself a revolutionary event, abolishing forever the “lag for consideration” and forcing every power executive, large and small, to consider seriously the *immediate impact* of any action (or omission) on a global scale. These communications revolutions have drastically jolted book-oriented and visually perceiving man, for the moment at least. The emergent culture is auditory and quantumlike in its unrelenting discontinuity. Its center is everywhere and it demands that total commitment that surpasses mere reflective collaboration and leaps into the realm of grace and charity which, because it has no viewpoint, can more readily accommodate to the unremitting hail of information-bits requiring instant processing and drastic, perpetually modified reaction.

It was a recent conversation with Marshall McLuhan that clarified for me this new element of our human situation. McLuhan himself seems more than a little wary of the electronic age and recalled that loose talk about the Mystical Body of Christ in this connection was criminally dangerous, that we might be closer to the Body of Antichrist, that Satan's name Lucifer had obvious nexus with electricity. Yet McLuhan himself in that same conversation made a suggestion for the creative use of worldwide TV which points up the positive elements of the situation: cancer-research might easily make the breakthrough to a cure if the mass of data were flashed to all viewers over a period of several days during which worldwide TV facilities were devoted only to this project. What even the most dedicated band of relatively isolated researchers (desperately small in numbers compared to

the whole human race or to the mountainous mass of data) could not spot, the *coordinated vision* of a worldwide audience might easily detect. This would, I contend, be nothing less than the species-consciousness in action.

There are other signs and symptoms, too easily dismissed by a superficial inspection as merely interesting novelties to while away a rainy evening. Seven of these symptoms may be mentioned here.

1. This generation of the young (all human beings born since World War II) tends to be both drastically migrant and quickly at home everywhere. They roam the world with open minds, sensitive perceptions, and unquiet hearts. They are not mere happy uncommitted tourists: they are seeking something and I am persuaded it is precisely this operative functional consciousness of mankind as an awakening integral species.

2. The most conservative statesmen of the great European powers have successfully pushed for a merger of resources that transcends national boundaries with the argument that *this is the only way to maintain the identity of European culture* against the two superpowers and a dangerously rising China (as Konrad Adenauer repeatedly asserts in his *Memoirs*). This is one of those regrettable way-stations on the road to anthropocentricity but it shows the way the winds of change are blowing.

3. Those who have sincerely devoted themselves to projects for improvement of race relations and aid to the hopeless and helpless have, *in practical experience*, become deeply impressed with the conviction that no aid will succeed that is not prompted and animated by a deep identification. Harvey Cox and Father DuBay have repeatedly formulated the thought that the inner-city worker who does not realize that he is really working on himself and his own problem will be of dubious value indeed.

4. The increasing possibility of organ transplants has faced many rugged individualists with major psychological and moral problems. But the transplant practice will increase and there can be no mistaking the deep psychological satisfaction (and wonder) of the donors who have been able con-

sciously to agree to such a contribution on their part to solidarity at the level of species.

5. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been adhered to by a number of small powers who have thus sacrificed personal ambitions to a greater good *they recognized as identifiable with their own*. Though there is still a highly regrettable anti-Chinese bias in this whole drive, it is once again a symptom of the deep-moving currents; nor should it be forgotten that the People's Republic of China has coupled every one of its successful nuclear tests with an eloquent appeal for control and peaceful use of this fearsome power.

6. The United Nations is still very much alive despite its many patent humiliations and despite the often quite well-founded demands for its overhaul, demands originating all along the political spectrum from arch-conservatives to the People's Republic of China. The most crying need is for a genuine globalization of this rough draft of a world government by the inclusion of the huge nation of China. But the significant symptom beneath the barrage of propaganda is that very few indeed are suggesting that the United Nations could be dispensed with entirely.

7. The last quarter-century has seen a major revival of interest in and commitment to a group of disciplines all of which seem improbable in the context of a technological civilization yet all of which share the goal of a breakthrough to a higher dimension of consciousness than that of the mere human individual: parapsychology, transcendental meditation, psychic research, astrology, even drug-experimentation ought not to be dismissed out of hand as aberrations to be suppressed. They may well indicate a groping after an evolutionary event on whose threshold we stand.

What the arch-individualist Nietzsche violently strove to obtain by a thrust that effectively precluded its realization seems on the point of implementation by the strong currents of creative evolution: the emergence of the true Superman. I choose this designation in preference to the New Mankind because we have had as yet no experience of a consciously integral species on our own small and maybe atypical planet

and the specific designation Mankind smacks too much of depersonalization. The emergence of the species-consciousness would only involve such horrifying depersonalization if it were effected by some other powering agency than charity. For, as Teilhard reminds us, love is the one power that can unite without submerging or destroying. It is simply that we are sluggish at realizing the extent to which love can unite to produce a genuinely new reality, despite all our experience with human reproduction.

Clearly the church must lend tactful support and sensitive understanding to this immense evolutionary drive, the more so since there are sobering indications of the extent to which it has lapsed from the control of charity into the hegemony-area of dubious totalitarian force. But this drive is clearly indicated, by the whole pattern of man's evolution, to be the very threshold of his zoological maturity and the last thing the church can in conscience do is to fulminate against it simply on the grounds that it contains dangers of perversion. Rather must the church resolutely embrace the dangers and by consistent conscious action eliminate them and divinize the drive.

The Catholic Christian tradition is especially psychologically suited to such a positive approach to this drive. It is therefore less than edifying to see so many indications of a Protestantizing individualism emerging within that tradition in recent years. The point here is quite simply this: no intelligent attitude can be assumed to any partial phenomenon (middle-class Western society, student protest, proletarian revolutions, Third World, or even the very notion of change) unless the imminence of this crucial breakthrough to species-consciousness is accorded full importance as inevitable in fact and desperately in need of divinization.

### *The Age of the Immortals*

A newly self-aware species thrusting to the stars would require a drastically expanded life-span even of its individual



cellular members in order to cope with the expanded dimensions and frame of reference of its assignment in any galactic and intergalactic locomotion system of which we can meaningfully speak, i.e., abstracting from the possibility of a breakthrough which would make the very concept of distance irrelevant. Of the resultant situation we could only draw entirely imaginative pictures. But there is solid evidence in our own day that medicine is, in total abstraction at least at the conscious level from any such cosmonautical requirements, forging ahead to probe the thresholds of immense breakthroughs.

The life expectancy and the actual life-span of Terran man has been quietly but persistently creeping upward in the last century. The causes are a combination of improved prenatal and child care, better nourishment, and the conquest of almost all contagious diseases. Cancer and cardiac afflictions can now receive the concentrated attention of medicine. There are peripheral but scalding tragedies of malformation and mental retardation to mar the picture; but the steadily loping advance of genetics, both analytic and now synthetic, should make possible before the end of the century interventions in the very germ-plasm, not only to forestall such tragedies but even to initiate the respective breeding-in or breeding-out of desirable or undesirable psychic characteristics. It is to be hoped that the church will here be governed by her own massively sane ancient doctrine too hastily and superficially pooh-poohed by self-styled expert critics. The church has steadily contended that original sin is transmitted in the germ-plasm. As we shall show directly, medical science will never succeed in breeding-out the very possibility of the phenomenon ecclesiastically described as original sin. But surely any assaults on factors complicating and exacerbating it should be welcomed by the sane Catholic tradition.

Yet it is quite another threshold against which medicine is now pushing with increasing concentration of forces. It is being contended that cell degeneration, the radical cause of senility and fatal disintegration even in the absence of attacks by hostile agencies, is not the normal state of the human body.

It is beyond all reasonable doubt that the fatal blow is being administered to the human composite more and more frequently in our day by psychic causes: all that complex of tensions, worries, competitive exertions and nameless dreads that trigger the various forms of cardiac failure or prompt the desperate measure of self-destruction. These causes will be increasingly eliminated with the emergence of a species-consciousness *animated and divinized by operational charity*. But what of the final threshold, the ultimate terminal?

I do not presume to chronologize in this essay any of the forecasts, for even their sequence cannot be predicted with any certainty. I merely say they will all occur within a single thrust-period cosmically speaking; and I see clear indications that they may all have occurred by the end of the next century. There is nothing inherently contradictory about a living organism's being immortal. I heard Barnabas Ahern suggest in a talk in Rome during Vatican II that the victory over death might well be entrusted to human agency and ingenuity. Such a breakthrough would, of course, have ultimately revolutionizing consequences and make incomparably more urgent the continuing drive to the stars.

The removal of the threat of death would reveal in the raw the true essence of sin, as a disorder not simply calculated to expose man to the horrors of hell at an unforeseen moment in the future but rather automatically exposing him to that quintessential hell in every present which is the closing of the circle of self-sufficiency around any reality less than the Supremely Real. But of the moral dangers of such a natural immortality as likewise of the moral challenge of the world we have previsioned, we can speak only after a consideration of the profoundest of all changes that would be wrought by such a coordinated revolution. This change would involve a breakthrough initially in the area of cosmology and consequently in the realm of asceticism, morality, and even sacramental piety.

The earliest Western philosophers sought for a unitary substance underlying the multiplicity of phenomena. Their candidates were basically material (water, fire, air, or the basic

ontic plethora and the essential pluralism of atoms). The deep insights of these early thinkers have been too lightly dismissed by successive, more sophisticated ages (sophistication comes from sophistry!). Einstein, the scion of a long line of speculative scientists, was likewise seeking for a unitary formula and, though he never found it, left an uneasy and propulsive heritage to his successors. The indications have multiplied in the last three decades among spokesmen for the most diverse branches of science that a breakthrough is awaited almost momentarily on this cosmological front.

Religious traditions have tended to see what they call "spirit" as the ultimate reality and have often depressed matter to the dubious status of an unreal projection of spirit or, in the darker madnesses of Manicheism, to the horrendous status of the active principle of evil. It is a special tragedy that the Christian tradition should have fallen victim to this tendency since the Incarnation is its radical and total refutation. In an ecstasy of imprecision, matter has been denigrated simultaneously for its massive inertia and for its fragile evanescence. The inertia notion has been exploded in the last half century by the whirl of activity discovered in the heart of the atom. As for the evanescence, it is quite patent that the forms or configurations assumed by matter are evanescent, not matter itself.

But though, rightly conceived, matter is neither totally inert nor yet evanescent, it does share two quasi-parameters with the God of religious tradition: it is not properly conceptualizable as an *entity*; and it is simultaneously supremely dynamic and supremely self-identical.

There was a day almost exactly one hundred years ago when Lenin felt he had to sound the alarm against the "electricians'" dematerialization of matter, its resolution into sheer energy. The idea is still tempting to recalcitrant but open-minded and perceptive spiritualists. How fine if matter could be conceived merely as a dragging coagulation of agile Energy (neologism for Spirit)!

In the light of the provisioned breakthrough in cosmology it would be impermissible to assign such inferior status to

matter. For energy and matter would appear as *equally relative and tensional states of a more basic reality*. This would effectively squash the hideously and lethally anthropomorphic notion of God as Pure Spirit (an extrapolation from the mental-psychic side or dimension of the human composite) who created souls by a process close to engendering and matter only by a haughty act of creation. It would be seen that the created reality known as spirit and the created reality known as matter are equally relative tensional states of a reality uniting both. This reality in the religious interpretation would still be created, a true *'en kai pan* not bastardized into a God-surrogate. But God would be viewed, with deeper analogical wisdom, as uniting in transcendent fashion the roots of the created reality called spirit *and the roots of the created reality called matter*. And the Incarnation would be seen as a marriage truly made in heaven.

No longer could the ancient lie be touted that matter wars and rebels and instigates evil against spirit, that the disorders of our world stem from the crude disorderliness of base matter. The Pure Spirit who is cause of all sin, primordial poisoning fountainhead of all evil, would stand properly exposed. It would be evident that the ultimate tension is between creatureliness and Creator, that this tension is a globally engulfing one but that it always originates in the spiritual dimension and infests matter from there. It would be realized that the elusive principle we call matter and which has no entitative reality of its own is an omen and sub-entitative antipode of the super-entitative reality God. It would be seen that the tension between creatureliness and Creator reaches a dramatic high point with the emergence of *entities* and a fortiori created spiritual entities; and that the tension can culminate only in a hypostatic reunion or in a plunge into the "storm of darkness" spoken of by Jude.

It would be sheer shallow lunacy to imagine that the provisioned breakthrough to integral functional species-consciousness, the outward thrust to the far planets, the acquisition of natural immortality or even the realization of a truly integral cosmology could free the evolving human creature

from the danger of sin. As Gandalf warned Frodo Baggins: "Always after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again."

What these forward thrusts can and must do is to direct the attention of that evolving creature to the concentrated pustule of that sin's poison, to the real threat of the Shadow. Sin has been variously described, in the imperfect evolving vocabularies of the past, articulations of an evolving awareness, as being an offense against God's majesty, a guilt-producing action, a threat to the eternal happiness of individual man. None of these articulations was entirely wrong or inapposite; yet none uncovered the real venom either: *the radical threat of sin is to the course and consummation of evolving creation*. Sin is the shadow cast by the grasping closing circle of the created reality striving after total self-centeredness and outright self-sufficiency and radical autonomy. It will therefore emerge in ever newer forms as the evolution of created reality progresses.

There are already unmistakable signs available to the world of 1969 to prove that a trans-individual human entity can sin in a way peculiar to itself and irreducible to the sum-total of the sinning of its constituent members. Indeed the question of collective responsibility ceased in 1945 to be a subject of pleasant theoretical scholastic debate and faced judges with cruel dilemmas. Their dilemmas have not yet been entirely solved, for no way has been found to punish a state as such for its sins as a state except the dubiously adequate, dubiously corrective method of financial reparations.

The crucial issue here is that such entities as states, cartels, and even ideological power-blocs are giving clear evidence of a kind of perverse and damaging action which can neither be reductively analyzed into a complex sum-total of individual defalcations nor yet contained by the disciplining of such individuals as are unlucky enough to be caught. It is urgently imperative that the church direct the closest and most sustained attention to the development of a social morality, a morality of human organizations, political and economic, and ultimately a morality of the new Superman. This is not for

an instant to suggest that the morality of the individual is outmoded: individual free man is still responsible for his moral acts; by these acts he can not only offend God and damage his individual fellowman but (and this is increasingly serious and important) damage as well the universal human fabric. The morality of the individual will always have to remain; but it is essential that the morality of the integrally functioning executive species be plumbed and elaborated before the church is faced with this new prodigy, potential giant of virtue, potential ogre of vice. And in the elaboration of this morality, with no undue neglect of commutative and distributive justice, the attention will be more and more concentrated on the capacity of each act to close or open the circle that is this created reality, the species man. For it is this ultimate thrust of human evolution which is of crucial importance. The perceptive and open-minded man can scarcely any longer entertain seriously the contention that Terran man is the only intelligent created species in the universe.

We have noted that man's tendency to stricture has always created dreadful tensions even within his own species. Always, from first conscious cell to all-embracing perfect creature, the only virtuous tendency is openness and readiness for new bondings (always, however, open bondings). And virtue here has a biológico-cosmological meaning as well as a strictly moral one. Only such openness is really powerful, really a gulf and channel for the great Power. Vice squanders the Power by clutching it in a restrictive grasp. The threat of that Shadow will always accompany man; indeed the Shadow will assume forms and proportions entirely bizarre and paralyzingly horrifying to present-day man as the evolutionary drama races against the loping threat of the Shadow. But there is a steadying hope, if the church can and does nurture evolving man and if man but responds at the crucial threshold to the Power that can dissipate the Shadow.

The mediation of the Incarnation's powering and liberating ingress into the integrated, matured, and outward-thrusting human fact: that will be the business of the church in man's expanded world of 2019.

# Ideological Consciousness

Richard Hinners

Richard C. Hinners, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Loyola College in Montreal, is concerned to rehabilitate a term that for many has fallen into disrepute: ideology. While granting that there is much truth in the pejorative understanding of the term, Dr. Hinners argues that simple rejection of ideology is of little help in a time when "technological man is unmindfully preparing his own self-destruction." Moreover: "True ideology is possible and, in view of our situation and the dialectic operating within it, it is necessary." Consonant with Dr. Hinners view of ideology is the fact that he finds more merit in Marxism than do many Christians; hence it should come as no surprise that he is an associate editor of *Internationale Dialog Zeitschrift*, a journal devoted to dialogue between atheists and Christians. His essay originally appeared in the Autumn 1969 issue of *Continuum*.\*

PHILOSOPHY HAS BECOME ideology and I, a philosopher, must aspire to become an ideologue. My statement and development of this thesis with its problematic will be in confessional format in order to cope with two problems. First, I will attempt here to summarize my confessions with many lacunae and to offer a provisional synthesis of a broad range of disparate problems on which I have some strong opinions and a few insights but which I am not yet able to develop "objectively" without telling stories. Second, the major thesis to be confessed is one which will demand a novel approach to subjectivity in which the self is neither the Cartesian *cogito* nor the Kierkegaardian "existing individual" but a "self" which is just as much "We" as "I," just as much public as private, just as much social and political reality as psychological.

\* Saint Xavier College, Chicago, Ill. 60655.

I am sorry, that is, guilty and anxious, that the following Promethean tale is true.

Once upon a time, man understood himself in terms of what he is not; he saw himself as a product of nature, of gods, or faith but not a product of man. At that time man lived in an environment of natural things or else in a world of God's creatures and he reckoned himself as one of these things. However much man then considered himself to be different from the rest of nature in that he was intelligent or spiritual, still his environment was primarily a natural one with its own laws, its own values, its own significance, to which he had to conform himself in his thinking and his doing. Then, just some five hundred years ago, man undertook the Promethean task of dominating nature. He stood up and sought to expropriate nature through science and technology. He relegated nature to the status of materials or natural resources for his own products. Before, when nature stood between man and man, men understood one another in terms of that which was not themselves, whereas now, increasingly, man begins to comprehend himself in other men as the users and producers of his own products. The greater our responsibilities for our environment, the more responsible we become to our fellow men for the environment which we make. Now, at an ever increasing pace, our existence is becoming less cosmocentric and increasingly anthropocentric. Now, at an ever increasing pace, history-making is replacing nature as the prime reality or object of human concern.

In short, man has in fact (existentially) changed from a natural condition to the historical process of self-making. This change is probably just as significant as and surely more rapid than his change from animal to rational animal. And because it has been so rapid, we do not yet understand and are blind to what we are making of ourselves. We still fail to realize that man's control and domination over nature is also a control and domination over man. The result is that poverty, starvation, and war, which were once more or less natural and inevitable, have become forms of man's self-destruction: they threaten to become catastrophic to the degree that they are self-inflicted and so within our control. By fail-



ing to realize that our power over nature is also our power over each other, we become hell-bent on our own unmaking and self-destruction. The evolution of man from nature to a process of self-making is still underway, still largely unconscious and blind and very much in the balance. Our traditional concept of man as a nature is in conflict with our emerging reality as self-making. This misunderstanding of ourselves is the source of an unmaking of men even to the point of our imminent self-destruction. When we listened to and fulfilled the Baconian prophecy that knowledge is power, we Prometheans did not realize that this power was also a power over each other (and ourselves). It is not so much that nature would take revenge upon us for our violation of her; on the contrary, it is that we failed to realize we were ourselves natural and that any domination over nature is also a domination over ourselves.

This story leads me to the following four observations: (1) This is not the story of Prometheus but of ourselves who have decided to sympathize with and to follow Prometheus despite (or because of?) the warning of Hermes at the end of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*: "Don't say that Zeus has brought you to a calamity that you could not foresee: do not do this: but blame yourselves: now you know what you are doing." (2) There is nothing about our situation nor our consciousness of it which would lead us to turn back. Just as we heeded the Baconian prophecy that knowledge is power because, thanks to Christianity, we believed there was no Zeus or fate which would punish us, so today we are still separated from the Promethean story by Christian belief as well as by our Promethean undertaking of science and technology. What our pagan ancestors might have needed just does not apply to us. But the question which we are left with is: What positive self-knowledge do we have in this situation other than that the Promethean story is "just a myth"? I have indicated that the sort of consciousness which is lacking is a self-knowledge or an anthropological understanding rather than the scientific-technological knowledge of the natural sciences. Yet in reflecting upon the Prometheus story, we do have some degree of self-understanding in that we

"know" we are culturally moderns and not pagan Greeks. It is not Zeus who will punish us then: it will be ourselves—as Aeschylus says! (3) I say the Promethean story fits our situation. But to tell the story *as a story* is also to confess that the story is only perhaps true. Maybe our situation is not all that serious. (4) The source of my uncertainty about the story and why I told it as a story (and why as "philosopher" I am guilty of telling it) is that there are two themes which *in the story* are inseparably linked but which for me as "philosopher" ought to be sharply distinguished. There is a religious apocalyptic theme of not only imminent destruction but of imminent self-destruction. There is also an assertion of a need and desire to understand a change "in the order of things," in man and in nature. But can these two themes be distinguished? Is not distinguishing, much less separating, the "subjective," apocalyptic theme from the "objective," noetic theme precisely the very *modus operandi* of scientific technology in its insistence on control and "objectivity"?

Refusal to separate these two elements of our situation seems to correspond to the pejorative sense of "ideology" now current in our culture. "Ideology is the conversion of ideas into social levers."<sup>1</sup> Hence ideas are, or ought to be, considered, analyzed and judged coolly and objectively in their own right before and apart from their use and especially apart from their political (propagandistic?) use. Ideology "channelizes emotion into politics," whereas, as everybody knows, one ought to keep emotions out of politics. Thus the basis of the Marxian ideology is the reduction of religion to politics so that emotions formerly dissipated in religious rituals, in worship and in concern for an afterlife are now channeled into political action, thus making such action revolutionary and fanatical. Finally, ideologies are the product of intellectuals (as opposed to scholars) whose critical judgments of their society reflect their own rejection by their society and their desire to be accepted. But now, in our advanced technological societies, these ideologies are "exhausted" and irrelevant.

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is a summary, with quotations, of Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (Glencoe, 1960), pp. 370–375.

There is much truth in this popular, pejorative sense of ideology. But it is rabidly anti-Marxian and does considerable violence to what the term has in fact meant and still does mean in many societies today. This pejorative sense of ideology depends upon what it is reacting against, the Marxian sense of ideology. Moreover, the simple rejection of ideology is no answer to my principal dilemma: if technological man is unmindfully preparing his own self-destruction, then is this not a situation in which becoming conscious of what we are doing involves a fatal and even religious obligation to do so?

Marx also generally used the term "ideology" in a pejorative sense: an ideology is an inverted and imaginary reflection of men and their real conditions of life.<sup>2</sup> Ideological distortion is in general an inevitable result of a real antagonism within socioeconomic life, an antagonism which without ideology would neither make sense nor be livable and viable. To unmask an ideology is to reduce it to the historical conditions which give rise to it; conversely, the creation of ideology consists in "allowing consciousness to be taken as the living individual."<sup>3</sup> An ideology is then a theory ignorant of its presuppositions in real life. Such a theory is not entirely false once its presuppositions in material life are evident. An unmasked ideology ceases to be a (false) ideology and becomes knowledge once it is shown to be a reflection or generalization of class interests and conflicts. Only later did Marxists recognize their own position to be itself an ideology, e.g., distinguishing the true ideology of Marxism-Leninism from revisionist or false ideologies of social democrats or Maoists.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Marx, *German Ideology* (New York, 1947), pp. 4-69.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> So far as I know, it is only Marxist-Leninists who give a positive sense to the term. For a good exposition of Marx on this point which is open to a positive sense of ideology see Henri Lefebvre, *Sociologie de Karl Marx* (Paris, 1968), chap. III and his recent paper, "Le Marxisme et les Ideologies," in *Dialogue* (June 1969). For the historical development of this positive sense of ideology within Marxism see, Lichtheim, "Marxism and Marxology: The Transmutation of a Doctrine," in *Problems of Com-*

In general, the ideological conception of knowledge is an activist conception. It is not sufficient that philosophy merely interpret the world; it is also its task to change it. I have contended that when men set out to accomplish their Promethean mastery over nature they soon discovered that this involved a similar mastery over men.<sup>5</sup> The term "ideology" was originally coined with a positive sense to designate the study of the origin and genesis of ideas. Napoleon then gave it a pejorative sense when the *philosophes* set out to build a society in the image of their ideology.<sup>6</sup> The ideological turn in modern philosophy is thus consequent with the basic Promethean thrust of the Baconian vision. The conversion of knowledge and reason from religious and contemplative activity into the power of scientific technology has transformed not only our physical environment but more importantly also our social, political, economic and even our inner psychological life. The lesson of this historical development is that knowledge as power over nature entails knowledge as power over man. If one sets out to practice an activist conception of knowledge with respect to nature then sooner or later one must do the same with respect to man. In this manner ideology arises.

"Ideology," therefore, ought to be understood in two senses: (a) pejoratively, the illusory ideas or false conscious-

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*munism* (July–August 1966). Unfortunately Lichtheim only points to the historical phenomenon of Marxism becoming ideological and does not analyze it in terms of Marxist theory and practice. The recent papers of V. V. Mshvenieradze and J. Somerville (in *Akten des XIV Internationalen Kongresses für Philosophie*, I, 407–450) do offer such an account from the tradition of Marxism-Leninism, but they fail to take adequate account, in my opinion, of the specific historical situation of the Soviets as compared with other, later socialist societies.

<sup>5</sup> "The Ideological Turn and its Problematic for the History of Philosophy," in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Assn.*, 1970.

<sup>6</sup> The history of the term can be found in Mannheim, *Ideology & Utopia* (New York, 1936), pp. 59–75. See also the very informative paper of Lichtheim, "The Concept of Ideology," in *Studies in the Philosophy of History* (New York, 1965), pp. 148–179.

ness which, arising from a lived, socioeconomic-psychological dilemma or antagonism, is a displacement, rationalization, or surrogate of such a real-life antagonism; (b) the unmasking of (a) and the formation of a true consciousness of one's actual situation.<sup>7</sup> Since this positive sense of ideology is created by an unmasking of (a), a false ideology, it cannot be concluded that ideological truth is simply knowledge or science; ideological truth is "knowledge" of a special kind. In the first place, its truth is the result of the conscious experience of false consciousness. In the second place, this "knowledge" is always subject to critical review which could invalidate it once the conditions of life which constitute its base are altered.<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that ideological consciousness is dissipated in relativism. An ideology is true in relation to a very real situation of which we are fully conscious, just as a false ideology is false in relation to a very real situation of which we are not fully conscious or which we have misunderstood.

Finally, the realization that consciousness in general is ideological is not a metaphysical or a priori sort of knowledge. The thesis that philosophy has become ideology in both the pejorative and positive senses of the term can be defended only on the very concrete ground of our actual situation. These initial observations about the ideological turn of phi-

<sup>7</sup> This positive sense of ideology as "true consciousness" is both a departure from its current pejorative sense in our society as well as being un-Marxian. It is also a departure from the exclusively pejorative sense in which I use the term in *Ideology and Analysis* (Bruges, 1966): there true consciousness was simply "nonideological," at least when one is seeking an experimental basis for metaphysics. But the method there was the same as I now sketch out below: the uncovering of one's traditional thought-form as ideological and then from a base within our own experience to elaborate a different structure. Hence the analysis of speculative existence seems to be liable to being unmasked as an ideology. But "true ideology" does not mean just true for now; it has the character of an overcoming of an *old* ideology and the *projection* of a *new*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dewart's discussion of error and truth in his *Foundations of Belief* (New York, 1969), pp. 302-334.

losophy are only a general reflection upon what philosophy has been. They remain quite arbitrary unless grounded in the actual situation which provoked them to begin with. But the "actual situation" grounding the discovery of ideology is outside the domain of philosophy as traditionally conceived. The ground of ideology is our socioeconomic-psychic life and a certain problematic within our existence which, subjectively and unphilosophically, provokes a radical critique of our philosophical tradition.

In the remaining sections I shall offer an outline (with lacunae) of how one might go about determining what "our situation" is. To decide whether or not the above is merely a mythic statement of subjective convictions it would be necessary to carry out some such inquiry as the following.

### *Discovering the Dialectic*

"The whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason. And yet this society is irrational as a whole."<sup>9</sup> For some of us, e.g., kids, blacks, and other "oppressed peoples," this may be very true. But for most of us most of the time the whole is just not given and if and when it is of concern to us it is only under very special conditions. What are these conditions and how and why do they occur? The validity of "critical social theory" rests on its capacity to unmask the positive social theory of our society as ideological. Thus we cannot begin with the whole; we can only begin with the part where we are and ask: "*What are we doing?*"

We seek a descriptive answer to this question without a priori abstractions or methods in order to determine whether or not there is any experiential basis in our actual life for contending that thought is ideological. Let us begin by describing

<sup>9</sup> Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964), p. ix. Cf. also Herbert McCabe, "God the Future" in *Slant* (July 1969), especially sections entitled, "Overall Views," "Overall Living," and "Overall Absurdity." Also Satre, *Search for a Method*, trans. by Barnes (New York, 1963), pp. 77-78.

"we." For we are the ones who are both the doers or agents in question as well as the ones who ask the question, Who are "we"? There are four senses of "we" here and it is the fourth sense which I take to be the subject of our question:  $we_1$  is you and I (author and reader);  $we_2$  is I with others;  $we_3$  is you with others;  $we_4$  is  $we_2$  and  $we_3$  (I with others and you with others).  $We_4$  is then all of *us* but not everybody: there are others who do not (yet?) seem to be involved.

Now of course pure description is impossible. The classification and distinction of acts is not only of the essence of meaningful life but also of any human life at all. Hence description here can only mean taking note of our customary classifications of acts. Hence description is basically a conservative method. The philosopher may have a choice of categories but the man may not. Guided by these considerations, I choose the following eight categories since they involve four classical levels of life, the biological, the sentient, the intellectual, and the volitional:

- |                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| (1) working.....   | (2) playing  |
| (3) loving.....    | (4) hating   |
| (5) thinking.....  | (6) doing    |
| (7) believing..... | (8) doubting |

These categories can be rearranged in various ways allowing (5-6) and (7-8) to be related to (1-2) and (3-4) such that either (1-2) and (3-4) are the basis of (5-6) and (7-8) or vice versa, (5-6) and (7-8) provide the meaning and structure for (1-2) and (3-4). My bias in choosing opposed pairs of categories is to give full rein to feelings and valuations, whereas a more empirical approach would at least want to separate factual data from valuation. Hence for every answer to our question I would want to ask, "Are you having fun?" or, "Do you like doing that?" Likewise, under (3-4), loving (and enjoying) versus hating (and avoiding or fighting against), the further question of whether it is good or bad might refer to (7-8), while, "Is it fun?" would be asking for the relation of one's loving or hating to (1-2). Should valuations be lacking in our responses

to the question, then answers will tend to fall under (5-6).

The following descriptive generalizations are abbreviated and tentative. They are not only introspective, and I must assume that you will check them with your own experience; they are also subject to my being questioned and corrected by others. With these limitations in mind, I offer the following observations about what we are doing:

As regards (1-2), working and playing: we are affluent enough so that our working is not wholly a working out of necessity to stay alive. We do not live a "hand-to-mouth" existence. Contrary to the prevailing work ethic of our society, our working is oriented to play (or perhaps to 3-4) as much as, if not more than, it is for the sake of material necessity. To be sure, maintaining an "accustomed" standard of living is certainly involved but that standard goes far beyond the level of minimal biological needs. We also note how much of our business is involved with and dependent upon people having fun. In short, although we accept the prevailing meaning of work as *necessary* activity, we also experience the seemingly happy convergence of working and playing.

As regards (3-4), loving and hating: we must grant the difficulties of a purely descriptive approach to our emotional, personal, and private lives. After one has abstracted from all the recent psychological and anthropological treatises on the subject as well as from current novels and plays, I think we find at least an ambiguity in who and what we love or like, detest or dislike. How much of our lives consists in being annoyed or angry rather than liking or loving one another? For myself I can only confess to feeling at least as much of one as of the other and this even with respect to the same persons and the same situations. Moreover, the difficulty in considering and answering the question descriptively without recourse to morality, religion, or psychiatry, etc., shows that our feelings are highly structured by (5-6) and (7-8). This structuring of our feelings even seems quite conscious. We use (5-6) in the form of psychological concepts and (7-8) in the form of moral and religious beliefs to confess and evaluate our feelings. But we do *not usually* relate our



emotional life consciously to (1-2) and ask: What aspects of our emotional life do we find fun? It is this area which needs more reflection than we are accustomed to give it. In any case, to the degree that the relations of (3-4) to the other three aspects of life are unclear or in conflict with one another then our feelings are ambiguous. And to confess that they are ambiguous is to confess that we are indifferent to or in conflict with one another.

As regards (5-6), thinking and doing: Thinking is generally opining and can be considered under (3-4). But when it is understood to be rational, methodic, and scientific thought then we are confronted with the whole crisis in the very meaning of science as it is pursued, taught, and applied in our lives. I refer of course not only to controversies within our schools about the "relevance" of curricula but also to the increasing confusion about the relation of science to society and to life in general. In all these areas the distinction between thought and action, if it has not disappeared, is at least under dispute.

As regards (7-8), believing and doubting: I include here moral convictions as well as explicitly religious beliefs. That believing and doubting no longer exclude one another has become almost a truism. Moreover, the reduction of belief to thought and reason, and in modern times its further reduction to (3-4) and even to (1-2), is equally notorious.

Two generalizations about all four areas of what we are doing now follow: (a) our actions are either in conflict with one another or they are indifferent: in either case they become ambiguous; (b) to the extent that they are ambiguous they are not so much actions as they are *happenings*—and this despite our consciousness of them as our actions.

Any descriptive answer to the question of what we are doing will sooner or later encounter the general response, "having problems." To be sure, what is problematic can be located within (5-6) or even (7-8) or (3-4) but our descriptive account of what we are doing is incomplete until we specify the sort of hesitations and reflections we are having in the course of our doings. Let's repeat the four categories

of what we are doing, but now on the problematic level of reflection. Then our problems about what we are doing are either: (1) environmental or technological; (2) psychological or political; (3) theoretical or practical; (4) normative or anarchic.

*Environmental versus technological problems.* The former arise naturally or independently of human purpose, whereas the latter occur within the scope of human calculations. The distinction and the ambivalence between these two forms of problematic is evident in the "population explosion" in relation to various plans, e.g., birth control and agricultural technology to "solve" the problem of famine and hunger. The issue of the "arms race" in relation to the development of modern technological warfare is equally illustrative. The basic conflict here is between the statement of a problem as natural and then not only setting out to propose ways of controlling it but in so doing even intensifying the original problem. The root of the conflict might be uncovered by a thorough interdisciplinary study of contemporary social, behavioral, and humanistic disciplines: Is there something inherently contradictory in applying the methods and principles of the natural sciences to the study of man?<sup>10</sup>

*Psychological versus political problems.* The former state problems as a function of my inner life whereas the latter see them as a function of my relations with others. Is this distinction any longer viable?<sup>11</sup>

*Theoretical versus practical problems.* Is the distinction between science and technology anything more than a methodological abstraction of questionable importance for scientists and engineers but not for the understanding of the concrete historical reality of science as a mode of human experience?

*Normative versus anarchic problems.* Current controversies

<sup>10</sup> That there is, is one of my principal conclusions in *Ideology and Analysis*, pp. 208–216.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (London, 1967), and his essay, "The Obvious," in *The Dialectics of Liberation*, ed. by Cooper (London, 1968). Also Sartre, *Search for a Method*, pp. 62–68.

between "liberal" and "conservative" theologians are a good illustration of this conflict.<sup>12</sup> Equally illustrative is the way in which current "law-and-order" rhetoric goes together with the assumption (and fear) of anarchy.

Finally, on the judgmental level of *appraisals* of what we are doing there is the single conflict between *functional judgments* of adequacy, relevance, effectiveness, etc., versus "subjective" or *ideological judgments* which claim to be essential, categorical, and holistic. So long as the latter can be subverted by the former then functional judgments will ultimately be found to be groundless while moral judgments will continue to be rejected as a priori and subjective.

In conclusion, we must confess that what we are doing is also a happening. What we suppose in any particular case is purposive action turns out to be just as much what we happen to find ourselves doing. Likewise, what we take to be neutral, value-free, natural matters of fact (e.g., our feelings) turn out to be contrived and intended actions or manipulations carried out unconsciously by ourselves or consciously (but impersonally) by others. We have discovered in what we are doing a fundamental dialectic between chance happening and intended (free) action. The discovery of this dialectic within our lives is the soil from which ideology, both false and true, will inevitably emerge.

### *Dialectical Thinking as Negative Thinking*

The four pairs of descriptive categories are now related dialectically such that each is reciprocally related to its contrary. But all eight doings are goal-directed: they have objects or values. Therefore, their values are also their countervalues or disvalues. "Values" are objects and issues of contention and discommunity.

Traditional ethics as founded by Socrates had a similar base: the conflict of opinions among men as to what to do or not to do. The Socratic solution of discommunity was to at-

<sup>12</sup> Cf. for example, Dewart, *The Future of Belief* (New York, 1966), pp. 7-20.

tain an idea or universal definition. From Plato onward this "solution" replaced the dialectical reality which was its source and principle. An examination of the history of ethics and its situation today would show that ethics has become baseless because of a refusal to recognize (what Socrates did) that the basis of ethics is not what-is but rather the absence of any univocal and categorical reality. So long as discommunity is not taken to be the ground of ethical thought then ethics can only admit that "ought" is separate from "is."

There are three ways in which one might analyze discommunity or social violence: (a) psychologically; (b) technologically (game theory); (c) phenomenologically. Neither (a) nor (b) can offer a factual basis for ethics, since in both the actual holding of values is something subjective because it is unobservable and cannot be denoted by the theory. A phenomenology of violence could suffice if the following conclusions of such a phenomenological analysis were incorporated into ethical thought: (i) Violence or discommunity is essentially one-sided. Each perspective (offense, defense, and neutrality) covers up the other two. Even neutrality either makes violence appear as sport or play or else it is a feigned neutrality in the form of morality or technology which communicates and organizes violence throughout whole societies.<sup>13</sup> (ii) Although a phenomenology of violence is itself an objective and neutral view of violence, it shows violence to be a phenomenon which, because it is essentially one-sided, entails a commitment to its existence.

Once one undertakes such a dialectical ethical theory then "good" and "bad" are very much grounded in factual experience, since there are now "good guys" and "bad guys."

<sup>13</sup> There was a time when traditional ethics in the form of retributive justice did provide an impartial judgment of violence. But it did so only by placing this neutrality on the side of an offended society and it could do so effectively and credibly only if the rule of law and reason were not subordinate to a still greater coercive power. But when morality becomes confused with and subverted by technology, the traditional neutral perspective of ethical reason becomes an ideological force supporting the spread and the escalation of violence. See my "Vietnam: Technology v. Morality," *Continuum* (Summer 1967).

Hence "we" begins to take on a different meaning. We<sup>4</sup> now begins to refer to others who are not ourselves. Such a dialectical ethical theory seems not to be an ethical theory at all. It seems to offer no hope for a *choice* between our continued discommunity and realistic possibilities of community. But that is just the issue: who are "we"? Are we "good guys" struggling for community? Or are we "bad guys" supporting continued discommunity? If the latter involves continuing to do what we have been doing, then what would the former involve?

### *Ideology as the Power of Negative Thinking: Intending Community*

The negation of the abstract, negative separation of fact and value can be developed into a positive total view of our situation. Such a "true ideology" would be at least the outline of an agenda for community whose base is the rejection of discommunity. But discommunity entails involvement in discommunity which I have called dialectic. Consciousness of that necessitating dialectic is already an alienation or detachment from one's involvement in discommunity and the beginning of a new involvement in struggle against the prevailing discommunity or irrationality of the whole. This alienation will (for us) follow the order of our inquiry: first a noetic alienation from the prevailing thought-forms of our society; then an anomic alienation from its ethics; then a psychic alienation, and finally a political and economic negation of all aspects of discommunity. Of course this is only the order of the discovery of the dialectic and of a true ideology; it is not necessarily the content of that true consciousness itself. Nevertheless, the order of the discovery of the dialectic does seem to offer a method for discovering (a true consciousness of) what is to be done. As for the content of such a positive consciousness, I can for now only offer the following generalizations concerning the four spheres of life discussed above (see page 127).

Concerning (1-2): In general let work be only that productive activity necessary for the fulfillment of necessary or

vital needs. All other productive activity is play and the only principle informing it is our aesthetic enjoyment. The negative force of this distinction is the refusal to work at the production of unnecessary goods for the profit of some to be consumed on the basis of the manipulated "wants" of an affluent few. The positive force of this general principle is the affirmation of work as the necessary fulfillment of the vital needs of all. ("All" is, of course, to be understood here as going beyond ourselves who are an affluent minority.) This principle certainly entails nationalization and internationalization of the means of production.

Concerning (3-4): The Marcusean development of Freud is substantially correct: no matter how justified and successful the subjugation of instincts for the sake of civilization has been, the fact remains that the very progress of this repressive civilization is the principal reason for its increasing obsolescence. This obsolescence is experienced by us (who are the principal beneficiaries of its technological affluence and progress) as the need for the desublimation of instinct, even though, "repressiveness is perhaps the more vigorously maintained the more unnecessary it becomes."<sup>14</sup> The negative (but true) consciousness of this situation is then sexual liberation with its necessary correlate and perhaps precondition, the social, economic, and psychic liberation of women. The positive consciousness of this situation is that this instinctual liberation is an essential correlate of the distinction (made above) between work and play. If psychic liberation is not linked with economic liberation then the former is either experienced as mental illness, perversion and as a further development of social pathology or it is only utopian. On the other hand, the need for economic liberation for us who are affluent can only be experienced, not out of material grievances, but on the basis of a psychic and emotional liberation in relation to both our working and our playing. This inner experience of the obsolescence of Western civilization then becomes inevitably the experience of what was once private (mainly our sexual life) becoming public (obscenity).

<sup>14</sup> Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (New York, 1955), p. 4.

This politicization of sex is the passage from a negative (but true) consciousness of the necessitating dialectic of our emotional life into a positive consciousness of its link with our emotional life.

Concerning (5-6): The negative consciousness that our intellectual life is dominated by repressive technological forces passes into a positive consciousness that the role of thought is: (a) its power as a negation and refusal of technological power for its own sake; (b) the consequent politicization of technological knowledge in general or else its development as an aesthetic activity. The project of (a) and (b) together will be the development of thought in both its productive power and aesthetic enjoyment, as either economic or aesthetic activity.

Concerning (7-8): Moral and religious beliefs enhance and extend a working and acting for community while they must also make us refuse those beliefs which continue to support our discommunity. Hence their role as social levers of action in strengthening our determination to act and live out what we think (5-6) as well as what we feel (3-4) and to do so not out of despair (and hence violently and fanatically) but out of hope and trust. If the "Great Refusal" of a negative (but true) consciousness ought to pass over into a positive consciousness of what is to be thought and done, then the ground of this positive consciousness is *not* that "it is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us."<sup>15</sup> It is also that we hope because of the actual situation which makes positive demands of transcending it toward real and positive possibilities which this situation already contains.

### *Ideology as Dialectical Thinking: Co-intending Community*

Who are "we" and who are the "others"? The answer takes the form of an analysis of three notions: the unity of mankind; imperialism; and egoism.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Benjamin, as quoted by Marcuse at the end of *One Dimensional Man*.

*The unity of mankind* is an economic, technological "happening," a being thrown together "cheek on jowl." Technological development entails the possibilities of greater economic interdependence, a "revolution of rising expectations," the hope of greater national self-determination and nationalism, population explosions due to the use of basic medical technology, the threat of mass famines and the consciousness of poverty and famine as due to unequal economic and technological development. This fact of the growing unity of mankind, of men being thrown together, then involves also a growing revolutionary consciousness on the part of the Third World toward technologically affluent nations.<sup>16</sup> Hence this fact of the growing unity of mankind is also the problem of mankind's disunity and discommunity. The prime issue of this disunity is revolution versus imperialism. The ideal of world government or "world federalism" is not an answer but only a desideratum. The need for unity is the fact and threat of imperialism versus the increasingly revolutionary action and proletarian consciousness of the Third World.

*Imperialism* is the attempt to control and exploit the human and natural resources of another, less-developed nation for the sake of furthering one's own affluence. It is one specific response to the unity of mankind which has "just happened" because of technological development. It arises because of a need for "rational," organized, predictable, and hence secure markets, resources, and labor. The very rationale of imperialism involves resisting by all means necessary the indigenous, autonomous national development of less-developed nations to the degree that "economic nationalism" is irrational and uneconomic. Imperialism leads to the formation of class inequality, class consciousness, and finally a "pro-

<sup>16</sup> Various counterpositions, e.g., those of Rostow, Galbraith, Brzezinski, I. L. Horowitz, and Myrdal, must be considered here. I would take issue with each one, to a varying degree, on the grounds: (a) as technological analyses they must abstract a priori from moral values; (b) that in so doing they are offering (albeit unconsciously) a false ideology justifying either continued tolerance of imperialism or else the advocacy of a new imperialism.



letarian" consciousness within the exploited country, especially on the part of pretechnological, rural populations. Imperialism seems to offer a final solution to the problem of technological development: the conquest and enslavement of the majority of peoples by a technologically powerful and affluent minority.

Our affluent *egoism* differs from the egoism of Third World peoples. Since we belong to the affluent minority, any internationalization of both economic assistance as well as scientific and technological development would be against our self-interests as members of an affluent class. So long as the principle of our economic life is that prosperity is founded on and motivated by self-interest, and so long as we continue to believe that values arise from the self as the locus of freedom, then we will continue to support imperialism. Conversely, should we cease to support imperialism and even oppose it then we must undergo a radical revision of these principles of our cultural as well as of our socioeconomic life. (What might be the psychological, moral, and religious consequences of imperialism if we [continue to] allow it to run its course to a final solution of racism or genocide?) But Third World peoples have their own self-interests: their "egoism" arises from material grievances about vital needs (whereas ours arise from the threat to the continued satisfaction of false needs—false because they are unnecessary or nonvital needs and false because they are not our needs but are manipulated needs). Since the self-interests of Third World peoples are vital their needs can become the basis of "peoples' wars" (whereas our wars are waged with increasing dependence upon technological power).

*The choice* is then twofold. Their choice in the Third World is vital because founded on immediate material, life-and-death issues. Our choice, on the other hand, is primarily moral and noetic: it is a choice for our community, interest and being-with other men or it is a choice for our continued and increasing disinterest and discommunity with other men. Our choice is whether to live (and so to act) for or to continue to live (and so to act) against the vital interests of two-

thirds of mankind. If we choose the former then we must not only envision a socialism in contradiction with our consumer materialism but also, and as a precondition, adopt a new consciousness of ourselves and so of our values and our interests. If we make the first choice then "we" must expand to include peoples of the Third World. If we make the second choice then "we" reverts back to its original sense of we<sup>4</sup> (see page 127).

Hence we must conclude with a study of Marxism which would take us beyond the limits of this outline. Such a study would include the following topics: Marxian "Predictions"—are they self-fulfilling prophecies?; different Marxist ideologies in relation to the practices which they reflect or project (where do we fit?); social democrats, past and present; the case of Czechoslovakia; the notion of a cultural "revolution."

*Ideology and Belief.* Is There a Christian Model of Society? Why we are communists because we are Christians: how and why previous forms of embodying Christian faith have become obsolete; the need today for the Christian to embody his faith primarily politically and how other forms of embodiment would follow; the distinction and interrelationship between Christian eschatology and communist ideology.

*Just-War Theory Revisited:* a review of recent literature on the subject (especially the work of Zahn and Ramsey); the development of technological war versus peoples' war.

"Death as Possibility": The secular and religious dimensions of death.<sup>17</sup> Conclusion. Our choice is both political and religious and hence is ideological. True ideology is possible and, in view of our situation and the dialectic operating within it, it is necessary. But a true ideological consciousness in our situation must distinguish without separating religious ultimacy and transcendence from political and historical ultimacy and transcendence.

<sup>17</sup> In *Continuum* (Autumn 1967).

# Ecological and Psychedelic Approaches to Theology

Richard A. Underwood

In the view of Richard A. Underwood, ecology and the psychedelic experience have common concerns—among them the need for new vision and the need for transformation. Ecology seeks a restoration of nature; the psychedelic experience seeks a restoration of self. And both have significant implications for theology. Indeed, they challenge theology to redefine itself; in large part Dr. Underwood's essay is an exploration of the meanings of ecology and the psychedelic experience "to see if these approaches can assist in the process of the death and rebirth of theology so as to facilitate its transformation into powerful story-teller for our culture." Dr. Underwood, who has taught at Upsala College, Drew University, and Stephens College, is now Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at the Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut. His essay is from the Winter 1969 issue of *Soundings*.\*

## *Introduction: Theology and Story-telling*

ALAN WATT's dedication to his book *Nature, Man and Woman* serves beautifully, I think, to introduce us to the themes of this essay:

To the beloved company of the stars, the moon and the sun;  
to ocean, air and the silence of space  
to jungle, glacier, and desert,  
soft earth, clear water and fire on my hearth.  
To a certain waterfall in a high forest;  
to night rain upon the roof and the wide leaves,

\* 400 Prospect St., New Haven, Conn. 06511.

Grass in the wind, tumult of sparrows in a bush,  
and eyes which give light to the day.<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that there are only three wonderful things in life: politics, religion, and love. Love's body: the body politic, the embodied god, and the embodied goddess. Theology, I submit, must begin with these wonderful things. It must stay close, close to the source, paying its own kind of homage to the "beloved company."

But—theology has forgotten the source, it has departed from its origins, it has left the wonderful things and has fled to the abstract, far-away things. Like a willow-tree in the wind, it bends to every current, seeking only to survive, to be able to stand straight when the storm subsides. Or, if it decides *not* to bend, theology takes a stand for the wrong reasons: it becomes rigid, doctrinaire, ecclesiastical, and dogmatic. It reminds me of a huge and ancient oak tree in a town where I once lived: it should have been a haven for all passersby; it could have supported a magnificent tree-house for the neighborhood children; its lower limbs would have been marvelous for a swing. But the tree had grown venerable. Local legend told that George Washington had once rested under that tree. Thus it was no longer seen as a tree but as a sign of times past. So a fence was put around it and one could appreciate it only from afar—not for its *is-ness* but for its *was-ness*.

One could say of theology today what Nietzsche once said of philosophy:

[it] remains the learned monologue of the lonely stroller, the accidental loot of the individual, the secret skeleton in the closet, or the harmless chatter between senile academics and children. . . . [it] is political, policed by governments, churches, academics, custom, fashion, and human cowardice, all of which limit it to a fake learnedness. [It] stops with the sigh "If only . . ." and with the insight "Once upon a time. . . ." [It] has no rights, and modern man, if he had any courage or conscience, should really repudiate it.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand: in December 1968, during Apollo 10's flight around the moon, passages were read from the book of

Genesis. The point is twofold. (1) The reading itself was a significant, even poignant, theological act. I say theological because the very *act* of reading was itself an attempt, however intended or received, to locate with some meaning a venture into alien territory with all of the risks, dangers, and uncertainties such a venture entails. It is significant, in other words, that passages were *not* read from *Peanuts*, *Alice in Wonderland*, or *Don Quixote*. (2) For better or worse the stories of the Judeo-Christian tradition still retain their function as the basic mythic structure in terms of which Anglo-American-European man interprets his existence—as much by *rejecting* the stories as by still recognizing an underlying attachment to them. The word *stories* must be emphasized, since it is obvious in the encounter with *other* religious stories that the Judeo-Christian story can no longer lay claim, as it once did in its relative isolation, to any absolute truth. In other words, it is significant that on the flight of Apollo 10 passages from the Gilgamesh epic, or from Homer (in spite of the name of the spacecraft), or from the story of Krishna and Arjuna were *not* read. (Hopefully, if this sort of thing continues, they may one day *be* read: Stanley Kubrick's and Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* may have prepared us for this!)

No matter how much the *stories* may still be functioning as the continuing mythic structure of Western consciousness, however, the mode of talking about those stories has become increasingly alienated from the sense and sensibility of Western man. In one respect the time is ripe for the subject matter of theology and the mode of theological talk to be joined together so as to transform theology into the art of story-telling. There are two crucial characteristics of the art forms (music and cinema) which exercise a powerful influence upon the so-called "now generation": one is the demand for complete and total involvement of the senses and the other is the function of the story. One might, in fact, describe the contemporary generation under thirty as six (or is it sixty?) million children in search of a story. One of the challenges facing theology, then, is the possibility not of simply *telling* but of *being* the story. What this means is summed up in

a story which Martin Buber recounts in the Preface to his collection of Hasidic tales:

A rabbi, whose grandfather had been a disciple of the Baal Shem, was asked to tell a story. "A story," he said, "must be told in such a way that it constitutes help in itself." And he told: "My grandfather was lame. Once they asked him to tell a story about his teacher. And he related how the holy Baal Shem used to hop and dance while he prayed. My grandfather rose as he spoke, and he was so swept away by his story that he himself began to hop and dance to show how the master had done. From that hour on he was cured of his lameness. That's the way to tell a story!"<sup>8</sup>

It seems obvious that from every quarter the world is showing signs of lameness—a series of fundamental malfunctions. If the story-telling that theology engages in is to have any healing effect (if, that is, theology is to tell its story in such a way that it "constitutes help in itself"), then it must open itself up to other modes of analysis, interpretation, and "telling." In many ways this is happening: the reinterpretation of theology from such diverse points of view as existentialism, process philosophy, comparative mythology, contemporary art and literature, psychoanalytic and depth-psychological approaches—all have had constructive influences (though many would deny this) upon the task of redefining the theological vocation. The purpose of this essay, however, is to see theology in the light of the science of ecology, on the one hand, and the psychedelic experience, on the other. How, that is, can ecological and psychedelic approaches to theology contribute to the possibility of transforming theology into a powerful teller of stories so as to make the story itself transformative? Or, to refer again to Alan Watts's dedication, how can theology tell a story which will facilitate a new sense of the "beloved company of the stars, the moon and the sun" while at the same time praising the earth and all who live upon it?

From the point of view of this essay, at least, it is this sense and this praising with which the science of ecology and the psychedelic experience are concerned and which con-

stitutes, therefore, their most creative contributions. Let me set the scene for amplifying and elucidating this remark by citing two recently published statements—one on ecology, the other on the psychedelic experience.

The lead article for the December 1968 issue of *Natural History* was entitled, "Ecology: The New Great Chain of Being." The article was prefaced by an editorial comment which read, in part, as follows:

That all things in the universe are intimately related is an ancient but still pervasive thought. . . . Not even today has it been banished as a popular notion of the moral order of the living world. . . . We are now, in mid-twentieth century, redefining and relinking the great chain. But instead of a system of rank based on a philosophical or theological scale of values, we are developing a system that recognizes the actual workings and consequences of relationships. . . . While many of us tend to endow the word that describes the science of the new chain—and that word is ecology—with mystical properties, the fact is that the science itself is concrete, precise, and empirical. Nevertheless, it is reordering our conception of the world, of the chain, as profoundly as a great religious idea might.

. . . The new great chain of being is starting to be perceived and we celebrate the perception.<sup>4</sup>

The second statement, on the psychedelic experience, is from "The Seven Tongues of God" in *The Politics of Ecstasy*, by Timothy Leary.<sup>5</sup> In the earlier part of the chapter, Leary advances the hypothesis

that those aspects of the psychedelic experience which subjects report to be ineffable and ecstatically religious involve a direct awareness of the energy processes which physicists and bio-chemists and physiologists and neurologists and psychologists and psychiatrists measure.<sup>6</sup>

Leary's hypothesis regarding the psychedelic experience has a point of contact with the statement from *Natural History*, then, insofar as both are concerned with energy processes. Accompanying the editorial statement from *Natural History* was a diagram, "The Energy Flow through a Biotic Com-

munity," which depicted the various cycles, processes, and transformations of energy between total energy intake and total energy outgo.

On the basis of these two statements alone, then, we might say: the science of ecology and the psychedelic experience are both concerned to make the researcher aware of the fundamental energy processes of the universe. Also, we might say, a fundamental presupposition of both is that ignorance of these energy processes can lead only to disastrous effects. Thus *both* the science of ecology *and* psychedelic experience intend—from different perspectives and procedures to be sure—to make man aware of and in touch with the fundamental energy processes which are basic to life. By the same token, the attempt to relate ecology and the psychedelic experience to theology presumes that the function of theology is to define, in the light of its subject matter, the appropriate relationship between all aspects of life under the aegis of the creative energy called God.

Leary, in the same chapter, goes on to cite some remarks by Buckminster Fuller:

I think we are all coming out of the womb of a very fundamental ignorance. We talk in ways that sometimes sound very faithful to our experience but which are many times very imaginary. . . . We think that we know quite a lot and are responsible for a lot of what is going on.

. . . Man is more than 99 per cent automated, and he is only a very small fraction conscious. Whenever he tends to suggest that he is really highly responsible for what goes on . . . he is very successful despite his ignorance and vanity.

I would suggest that all of humanity is about to be born in an entirely new relationship to the universe. . . . We're going to have an integrity . . . a good faith with the truth, whatever the truth may be. We are going to have to really pay attention.<sup>7</sup>

Remarking on this, Leary says:

This is classic psychedelic talk. One of the ecstatic horrors of the LSD experience is the sudden confrontation with your own body, the shattering resurrection of your body. . . .



One cannot understand the rhythms and meanings of the outer world until one has mastered the dialects of the body.

What is man? He is within his body. His body is his universe.<sup>8</sup>

It is the last sentence of Fuller, quoted by Leary, that is the essence of the matter: "We are going to have to really pay attention." In the end, this is the reason I am interested in exploring ecological and psychedelic approaches to theology: they are both very specific ways of "paying attention." Ecology pays attention to body in community and discovers body *de profundis*. In the psychedelic experience, the body *de profundis* is paid attention to and issues in the discovery of body *in community*.

Both together, the ecologic and the psychedelic, are engaged in a mutual task: the task, that is, of delivering contemporary man into a sense of awareness, body awareness, of who he is and where he is in relationship to the totality of what is. This it seems to me is the only purpose of thought and sensation, of brain and senses: to show not what could be, not what ought to be, but what *is* the case. The secret of man's adaptability and tentative success, therefore, is to be found precisely in the functional success of his sixth sense, brain, in relating and coordinating the other five senses. The cosmos in the fullness of its wisdom has assured itself of being able, through man, to sing its own praises. Man's problem is that of deciding whether or not he wants to be so used. Theology's challenge, from the point of view of ecological and psychedelic modes of reinterpretation, is that of becoming observant enough to see what is there and articulate enough to tell the story.

Let us turn now to a more specific consideration of ecology and the psychedelic experience.

### *Ecological and Psychedelic Meanings*

Ecology, as the systematic and conscious study of communities, is an attempt to redress the imbalances, conflicts,

distortions, and downright pollutions brought about by the violently one-sided and rapacious exploitation of nature achieved by technological man. Positively, ecology could be described as that discipline which, by being a disciple of nature, seeks to restore the wholeness of nature by seeing man with and not superior to nature. In this sense ecology is a pre-eminently therapeutic discipline or way of life-study: that is, it is a discipline which seeks to repair the brokenness and alienation of man-nature brought about by the fall of man from speculative modes of knowledge to the understanding of knowledge as the will to technological power. In this sense we could risk saying that ecology is the contemporary scientific expression of cosmic redemption. The whole earth now groans in travail at the noxious odors of technological-industrial flatulence. Ecology is the contemporary possibility of a realized eschatology. In the final analysis it calls for a redefinition of the fundamental terms of human existence, and it calls for a transformation, perhaps even the redemption, of the total context of life. The ecological vocation of redefinition and redemption is rooted, I suggest, in a *vision of the All*.

Let me address myself more specifically to the meaning of ecology. Aldous Huxley says that the question to which human ecology attempts to find an answer is this:

How is man in his demographic, physiological, psychological and cultural totality related to the totality of his natural and artificial surroundings?<sup>9</sup>

He then goes on to say:

For men as enjoying and suffering individuals, men as citizens, and men as members of our planet's dominant and destructive species, Human Ecology is by far the most important of the sciences. It is also, ironically, the least developed of the sciences, the most nearly non-existent.<sup>10</sup>

A more formal statement on the nature of ecology is to be found in a book by Eugene P. Odum on ecology published as part of the Modern Biology Series:

it is more in keeping with the modern emphasis to define ecology as the study of *the structure and function of nature*. It should be thoroughly understood that mankind is a part of nature, since we are using the word nature to include the living world.<sup>11</sup>

And further:

Another way to delimit the field of ecology is to consider the concept of *levels of organization*. . . . we may conveniently visualize a sort of "biological spectrum" . . . as follows: protoplasm, cells, tissues, organs, organ systems, organisms, populations, communities, ecosystems, and the biosphere. Ecology is concerned largely with the latter four levels, that is, the levels beyond that of the individual organism.<sup>12</sup>

Two things should be noted here. First of all, ecology is not concerned with organism in isolation; or, to put it another way, it is not concerned with *entities*. It is concerned with systems of energy flow and transformation. Ecology, that is to say, is a broad-focus and not a narrow-focus study. Second, being concerned with organisms in community and with systems of energy flow and transformation (*not* with organisms in isolation), ecology is—to use a nonecological term—a transcendental science. I mean this in the Kantian sense, whereby the individual organism is seen as *there* only insofar as it *is* in relation to system beyond itself. Ecology focuses on the system in totality which is *beyond* the individual organism, but which is the *possibility* of the individual organism. In other words, ecology is a transcendental science insofar as it raises the question: What is the possibility of anything (any individual organism) at all appearing? And it answers the question in this way: on the basis of the broadest systems of energy flow and transformation. This at least is what I see as the purport of Odum's comment that ecology is "largely" concerned with the levels of "populations, communities, ecosystems, and the biosphere." At this point another conception enters in—the conception of the no-thing, or the nothing. That is, systems of energy flow and transformation on a continuum from populations to the biosphere are

not *things*. What I am very clumsily trying to suggest is that, philosophically conceived, ecology as a transcendental science is a science of nothingness which makes it possible then to see individual organisms in the totality of their relationships. This is in sharp and decisive contrast to the ominous tendency of past science to ignore the *no-thing* and concentrate only on the *some-thing*. This narrow-focus concentration is itself largely responsible for the ecological crisis now confronting us. Ecology, in paying attention to the *no-thing* (the total system beyond the individual organism) thus can take more care-fully into account the *some-thing* (the organism itself).

This aspect of the science of ecology has important implications in three areas: environment, self-understanding, and religion. Environmentally, ecology makes it clear that the technological genius of Western man can no longer proceed as if pieces of nature can be shifted around at will and with impunity. Think, for instance, of the crisis of air pollution created in the last sixty years as a result of shifting coal and oil from underground reservoirs into the atmosphere through the process of burning in furnaces and automobile engines. Unless drastic (but ecologically appropriate) corrective measures are taken, the possibility of universal suffocation—without regard, in the good old American tradition, to race, color, or creed—is a very real threat.

A not quite so apocalyptic but nevertheless devastating illustration is given by Gordon Harrison at the beginning of the article on ecology in *Natural History* cited above. He tells of a mosquito-control program launched in Borneo which required spraying large quantities of DDT. Though the mosquitoes were destroyed, large numbers of a certain predatory wasp, which kept caterpillars under control, were also killed. This enabled the caterpillars, which nested in and fed on the material used to make the roof of the village hut, to thrive. As a result, roofs began to cave in. Then DDT was sprayed inside the huts to control the fly population. It killed the flies. But a small lizard, the gecko, which formerly had controlled the fly population, began to die from eating the DDT-laden flies. The house-cats, who controlled the rat population in the village, began to eat the gecko. The DDT

which had killed the fly, which then killed the gecko, now began to kill the cat. This meant, of course, that the *rats* began to thrive. With their increased numbers came the threat of plague. This problem was met by a return to natural controls: fresh cats were parachuted into the village in hopes that the original balance, which the DDT had destroyed, would be restored! Mr. Harrison comments:

Now this interesting tale illustrates some critical ecological facts. One is the extreme complexity and far-reaching character of the inter-relationships based on the stomach: the question of eating and being eaten. Second, that populations of creatures, who evolved in association with each other over a long period of time, have a relative stability. . . . Third, that all materials—food, minerals, water, and so on—in any natural system are constantly re-cycled. . . . The fourth lesson . . . is that Man's one problem-one solution approach to his environmental dilemmas inevitably courts disaster because it ignores the complexities of the living material with which he deals.<sup>18</sup>

In terms of environment, then, ecology rejects a rigid distinction between technological manipulation and surroundings. The results of such a distinction only compound the original problem—or what was *thought* to be a problem.

A second area in terms of which ecology has important implications is that of self-understanding. The science of ecology makes it quite clear (therefore supporting the conclusions of other disciplines such as existential philosophy and psychology) that man's understanding of himself as a mind-body dichotomy, where the brain at the top controls the "machine" at the bottom and the "stuff" out there, is not only false and malicious but harmful. To cite Alan Watts again:

it is increasingly clear to those who study ecology, sociology, biology, and even physics, that the individual organism is not what it usually feels itself to be: a bag of skin stretched around bones, muscles, and other organs as the temporary vehicle of a distinct and particular self or ego. The sensation of oneself as a separate center of consciousness and will, confronting an external world in which one is an alien and an intelligent fluke, is quite clearly a hallucination. It bears no re-

semblance to man, or any other organism, described in the above-named sciences, all of which see beings, events and things as processes which, however clearly distinguishable, are inseparable from the processes which surround them and constitute their environment.<sup>14</sup>

Religiously and theologically, ecology challenges an entire series of assumptions which the Judeo-Christian tradition has taught us to function under with regard to the understanding of God, man, and nature. There has been a centuries-long dispute between so-called "natural" theology and "revealed" theology. Natural theology refers to what man, by his natural endowments of reason, can find out about God. Revealed theology refers to what man, by an act of faith, the possibility of which is rooted in God's own graciousness, *is shown* about God by God's own "mighty acts," especially in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Leaving aside the differences between Roman, Orthodox, and Protestant doctrine, the fundamental Christian consensus is on the side of revealed theology. What this means basically, without going into the theological sophisms and casuistries which have marked the debate since the Reformation, especially, is that God, the sovereign father of the universe, the creator and sustainer of all life, reveals himself in faith through grace alone in person and human community (Israel, Christ, Church). The clue is provided in the very first chapter of Genesis: it is not the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the beasts upon the earth, the creatures of the sea that are created in the image and likeness of God. Only *man* is created so as to image, show, reveal the Being of God. Thus man is given a special place (which is only proper, since men themselves told and wrote this story of beginnings) superior to the rest of creation, in providing a clue to the nature of the ultimate creative energy. There has been a fundamental antagonism in the Judeo-Christian tradition between man and nature. The possibility of reconciling this antagonism, according to classical Christian doctrine, is located neither in man nor in nature: it is located in the spirit of divine reality which is distinct from both. The classic trinitarian and christological formulations attempted to overcome the problem of distinct-

ness by spelling out the dynamic interrelatedness between the three persons and between God and man. The fact remains that it is the *unity* which is a problem in view of a more fundamental assumption regarding distinctness. In some of the gnostic and mystic deviations from orthodoxy, on the other hand, it is distinctness which is a problem in view of the more fundamental assumption regarding *unity*.

The relationship between ecology and views of nature rooted in religion is dealt with in an article which appeared in the March 10, 1967 issue of *Science*. The article was written by Lynn White, Jr., professor of history at the University of California at Los Angeles. The article originally took the form of a lecture at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in December 1966. The title of the essay as it appeared in *Science* is "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis." Something of its spirit can be shown by quoting the final sentence: "I propose [St.] Francis [of Assisi] as a patron saint for ecologists."

The point of White's address is simply this: "What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny—that is, by religion." He expands upon this by saying:

I personally doubt that disastrous ecologic backlash can be avoided simply by applying to our problems more science and more technology. Our science and technology have grown out of Christian attitudes toward man's relation to nature which are almost universally held not only by Christians and neo-Christians but also by those who fondly regard themselves as post-Christians. . . . What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship. More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecologic crisis until we find a new religion, or re-think our old one.<sup>15</sup>

Fundamentally what White was calling his audience of scientists to was a radical *metanoia* as the basis for the restoration of a ruined nature and the restoration of an appropriate relationship between man and nature.

In terms of its implications for environment, self-under-

standing, and religion, ecology can be interpreted as constituting a new kind of natural theology. It is forcing a re-evaluation of and reconsideration of the man-nature relationship. The "ultimate energy question" is being relocated. No longer is the ultimate energy seen as "out there" in a divine spirit separated from the concrete processes of energy transformation: it is in the organism itself. More concretely, in the words of Gordon Harrison cited above, the ultimate energy question is settled in the stomach! The stomach is, so to speak, the alchemical vessel, fired by the bellows of the lungs, from which vapors are released which either help or hinder the total recycling program. This description is not intended to be reductionistic—though I know it sounds so. It is intended, rather, to show that the science of ecology dramatically reshapes our notions of what it means to be *present-as-body* in the world. What ecology says in this regard is of utmost importance: if we do not understand what it means to be present-as-body in the world (that is, as an energy-transforming system) then, if we continue on our present course, we face extinction.

It is not a question of giving up the technological manipulation and exploitation of our environment. Again, Gordon Harrison speaks to this in the *Natural History* report on ecology:

It's perfectly clear that man has to exploit his environment; he has to deliberately unbalance the natural system, because, in effect, unbalancing is the only way he can produce a surplus. . . .

And then later he says:

There is an essential conflict between man's need to exploit the environment and nature's need for balance and stability, and the only way we are going to resolve the conflict is to try to understand what is happening and to operate in such a way as to assure a maximum stability in nature where it is economical to do so.<sup>16</sup>

If it is not a question of forsaking the technological manipulation and exploitation of our environment (assuming we



"operate in such a way as to assure a maximum stability in nature"), then ecology is a question of transforming the views of the man-nature relationship. As Professor White has pointed out, however, this is not just a question of science or ecology. It is, rather, a question of religious understanding. We are presented, then, with this dilemma: ecology calls for a reinterpretation of the man-nature relationship. But ecology in and of itself cannot bring about this reinterpretation. The Judeo-Christian theological interpretation of the man-nature relationship is antiecological insofar as it posits a fundamental antagonism between man and nature. The dilemma, then, is clear: if ecology cannot succeed without a reorientation which is at base religious, and if the religion of the culture itself is antiecological, then what is the way out? A hint is given by Professor White's comment: "More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecologic crisis until we find a new religion, or re-think our old one."

Now here is the point at which we can begin to bring the psychedelic experience to bear upon the issues posed from the side of ecology.

As we have seen, ecology deals with interrelationships of bodies in community, with systems of energy flow and transformation traceable through certain specific organisms which, however, are never looked at in *isolation*. Ecology, then, must be very sensitive to spatio-temporal configurations, since organisms in relation obviously presume a space-time locus. This aspect of ecology is pointed to quite specifically in the entry on "Human Ecology" in the 1934 edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Each of the three general categories of subject matter for human ecology specified stress spatial and temporal relationships:

1) ecological organization, which represents the spatial arrangements of population and institutions at any given time . . . ; 2) ecological dominance, which represents dynamic or functional aspects of spatial relationships; 3) ecological succession, which describes temporal changes in the human community.

What is significant about this description is that it points to the organization of space-time. The organization of space-time is an art form, as we see especially in architecture. In this sense, then, architecture is the primeval form of ecological awareness insofar as it structures space-time relationships which organize the flow and transformation of energy. One of the most striking examples of this ecological awareness in architecture is to be found in sacred architecture. In its form and function, sacred architecture must function in such a way as to integrate all space (*axis mundi*) and time (alpha and omega, first things and last things) in a living relation to people and landscape. This is emphasized by Vincent Scully in his book *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods*. In the chapter entitled "Landscape and Sanctuary" he says:

the specific variations in form which each temple exhibits derive both from its adjustment to its particular place and from its intention to personify the character of the deity which it . . . is imaging there. . . . a deep general pattern runs through all sites, both in the chosen shapes of their landscapes and the constructed forms of their temples. A profound repetition, at once the echo of ancient traditions and the syntax of a new art, informs the whole and sets off the specific statements which irradiate it and which, by the classic period, produce an unmatched dialogue between oneness and separateness, men and nature, men and the facts of life, men and the gods.<sup>17</sup>

Further on in the same chapter he says:

Indeed, Greek temples and their sanctuaries express concepts which embrace the whole of the larger issues of life as the Western world has most realistically come to know them, since they were the result of an attempt to grasp reality whole, not to transcend, but to understand the apparent truth of things. . . . Greek temples and their sanctuaries in fact gave form to concepts more balanced and complete than Western civilization has normally been able to grasp in any of its post-Greek phases.<sup>18</sup>

What we must seek now is a connection between this and the psychedelic experience. The connection is direct, I think,

but not susceptible of direct statement. Whether one is speaking in terms of Vincent Scully's view of Greek sacred architecture or Lynn White's view of the contemporary ecological crisis, it seems quite clear that spatial relationships can be understood, interpreted, and experienced only in terms of states of consciousness. That is, space-time is a form of the intuition and not a characteristic of the so-called objective world. This gives more point to Professor White's judgment of the necessity of a *metanoia* as the prerequisite to resolution of the ecological crisis. Or, to put it another way, the experience of space-time must be changed in such a way as to make it experientially clear that space-time is a subjective intuitive form, a principle of interiority. Or, again: the object *in* space-time conceived externally is to be seen as the occasion for triggering daydreams, phantasy, free association, reverie—the occasion that is for deliverance into, and directly into, the realm of inner space-time. This is the only way, I submit, that the object, understood as *art-object*, can be truly satisfying. If it does *not* so function, then the dichotomy between inner/outer, subject/object is still in force and instead of satisfaction there is alienation.

Gaston Bachelard makes this point over and over in his book *The Poetics of Space*, especially in his chapter "Intimate Immensity." He heads the chapter with a quotation from Rilke: "The world is large, but in us it is deep as the sea." Then Bachelard begins:

One might say that immensity is a philosophical category of daydream. . . . the daydream transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity. . . . Isn't imagination alone able to enlarge indefinitely the images of immensity? . . . [Daydreaming] always starts the same way, that is, it flees the object nearby and right away it is far off, elsewhere, in the space of elsewhere. . . . Immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Later in the chapter, Bachelard appeals to Baudelaire and his use of the word *vast*. He begins this by quoting Baudelaire's judgment to the effect that "the opium-eater must have a 'vast amount of leisure' to derive benefit from his soothing day-dreams." Also: "Daydreaming is encouraged by the 'vast silence of the country.'" Bachelard makes it clear that the intimate vastness or immensity is on behalf of what he says "we might call an increase of being." He then moves to Baudelaire's approach to and experience of music as the occasion for "the progressive expansion of the daydream up to the ultimate point when immensity is born intimately, in a feeling of ecstasy, dissolves and absorbs, as it were, the perceptible world." Then, describing Baudelaire as "now entirely immersed in the oneirism of music," Bachelard quotes directly from Baudelaire's essays on Romantic Art:

I have one of those impressions of happiness that nearly all imaginative men have experienced in their sleeping dreams. I felt freed from the *powers of gravity*, and through memory, succeeded in recapturing the extraordinary voluptuousness that pervades *high places*. Involuntarily I pictured to myself the delightful state of a man in the grip of a long daydream, in absolute solitude, but a solitude with an *immense horizon* and widely diffused light: in other words, immensity with no other setting than itself.<sup>20</sup>

These accounts, as we shall note later, are closely related to the nature of the psychedelic experience. They also enable us to make a tentative statement of the connection between ecology and the psychedelic experience.

Ecology calls for a redefinition of the man-nature relationship which means experiencing nature in a more intimate way. What Professor White calls the ecological crisis, brought on by the recent marriage of science and technology, is characterized not by intimacy but by crowdedness, not by loving participation but by extreme aggression and exploitation. Thus he calls a group of scientists to a *metanoia*; and one part of the thesis of this chapter is that the psychedelic experience may be seen as perhaps an instrument on behalf of this *metanoia*. So let us now discuss the psychedelic experience directly.

The psychedelic experience is such that it delivers the subject momentarily (anywhere from one to eight hours, depending upon the substance and dosage) from bondage to culturally programmed cortical control. This, of course, is what makes the experience so disturbing. The subject is transported into realms where the ordinary controls and guidelines are temporarily suspended. This enriches considerably the fullness of one's fantasy life and allows for the possibility of re-experiencing connections with one's self and cosmos which cultural programming has prevented. But though the experience is necessarily disturbing, is it thereby *dangerous*? (I am assuming the presence, during the experience itself, of someone trusted and *trusting* who can be counted upon in his wisdom and compassion to prevent any physical harm to oneself or another, should the need arise.) The answer to the question of the *danger* of the experience depends on the view of the efficacy and even safety of the cultural controls from which one is temporarily delivered. I personally doubt that the psychedelic experience, if carried out under the appropriate conditions, will do as much harm to one as the culture which has produced the threat of atomic annihilation and has polluted the water, the air, and the earth. *One* of the reasons for considering ecology and the psychedelic experience in relation to each other is that the latter is an experiential correlate to ecological intentions: it transports the subject to realms of immediate sensation and imagery much as they must have been experienced prior to the rise of cultural-rational interpretation, indoctrination, and technological manipulation—all of which have issued in such actual and potential disaster.

The psychedelic experience is a kind of dying to one mode of existence in order to be reborn, temporarily, into another mode experienced as revelatory. (If, as has been suggested above, ecology is seen as a new kind of *natural* theology, the psychedelic experience can be seen as pointing to a new kind of *revealed* theology; that is, once the decision has been made to ingest a psychedelic substance, then the substance, in profoundly complex and as yet unknown ways, releases potentialities of the nervous system and *shows or reveals* images,

sensations, and cognitions over which the subject himself has relatively little or no control.) This motif of death and rebirth—meaning by this, of course, the death and rebirth of consciousness—is crucial to understanding the nature of the psychedelic experience. It is basically an initiatory experience which involves the necessity of moving from one realm to another, undergoing the ordeal and then returning. A description of this process—though not directed explicitly to what we today call the psychedelic experience—is provided by Joseph Campbell's monomyth in his early book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

The mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark . . . , or be slain by the opponent and descend in death. . . . Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces. . . . When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. . . . intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection . . . ; if not, he flees and is pursued. . . . At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir).<sup>21</sup>

This account is the more important since it appeared some fifteen or twenty years before the word "psychedelic" became part of the vocabulary of the 1960s. It is important to recognize this because Campbell's descriptions are based upon a study of hero-legends in virtually all cultures. The point is interesting and important for the following reasons: if these or similar procedures and modes of interpretation regarding religious myth had influenced the study of religion for the past twenty-five years, then the discovery of the psychedelic

substances and its subsequent effect would not have been so surprising and shocking. As it turned out, however, the modes of analyzing and interpreting religion and mythic experience in the decades since World War II were informed largely by neo-orthodox and existentialist canons (the gurus of *this* culture being primarily Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich). Thus for the generation entering college and university study in the decade of the sixties there was no instruction available for a "consciousness expanding" interpretation of mythic and religious categories. Theology, academic psychology, philosophy, and literature departments all fell into the trap set by the unholy, basically rationalistic alliance created by the unwitting partnership between positivism, analysis, neo-orthodoxy, and existentialism. (I am speaking here, obviously, not of *persons* but of creative, radical, potentially redemptive insights domesticated into establishment academic political hermeneutics!) Thus, we can see now in retrospect, the stage was set for Timothy Leary's Harvard revolution. It is no accident but of profoundest meaning that in the mid-years of the 1960s *two* religious phenomena compelled well-nigh universal journalistic attention (to the detriment, incidentally, of *both* the leaders *and* the movements in both camps): the death-of-God theology and the psychedelic phenomenon. Can there really, after all, be one without the other?

In any event, the dimensions of the psychedelic experience which Campbell's analysis of the hero-journey reveals have not been widely enough understood or appreciated. This is due, as I perceive it, to two reasons.

First of all, our culture has a great fear of regression out of control—that is, out of *its* (the *culture's*) control. That is, the emphasis put on modes of rational control and distinction and the disciplines appropriate to them has generated a great fear of the irrational. The irony is that we are then put in a position whereby we are caught in the grip of the very thing we strive so mightily to control—we are thrown into a frenzy by the return of the repressed. We seem to have no rational way of dealing with it.

Second, and probably more importantly, the processes de-

scribed by Campbell and represented by the psychedelic experience run counter to a fundamental presupposition of our culture. The presupposition is that the hero-journey, if it is to be undertaken at all, is to be undertaken only by the elect of God or by the man of genius who does his work on behalf of his fellow man who is to remain more or less unconscious. The psychedelic phenomenon, on the other hand, is a call to each man to become his *own* hero, his *own* shaman, his *own* myth-maker. The culture at large is oriented toward the view that only certain persons can undertake the hero-journey: those who have done so are, of course, the cultural heroes. Thus the culture specifies mimesis of the recognized hero-journey as the only allowable behavior. Some comments by Weston LaBarre may be helpful here. In his essay entitled, "The Dream, Charisma, and the Culture Hero," LaBarre is discussing the difference in the attitude taken by society toward the shaman as distinct from the attitude taken toward the psychotic. (The point is that any deviation from the culturally sanctioned hero-journey is experienced as a threat, at best, and as psychotic at worst. On the other hand, perfect mimesis of the hero-journey which is culturally sanctioned endows the adventurer with a shamanlike quality.)

The shaman uses defenses that are relatively *more* sanctioned culturally, and he uses culture traits more *in proper context* than . . . does the socially recognized psychotic. The psychotic has failed to become the emotional lightning rod for his society, whereas the shaman has succeeded in this function. . . . the psychotic is too threateningly *like the child*, whereas a frightened clientele is seeking a *father* in the shaman.<sup>22</sup>

Two associations are in order here with regard to the psychedelic phenomenon. First, if the frightened clientele is seen as middle-class America, then the phrases "flower children" and "flower power" can be seen as threatening and hindering the quest for a shaman-father. Knowing this (though expressing it in different terms) the established professions of the middle class, especially law, politics, education, medicine, and religion, must repudiate the "children."



Second, theologically we have not paid enough attention to, much less understood, the aphorism of Jesus which draws a relation between "becoming as a little child" and "entering into the kingdom of heaven." This may be due to the fact that the theological establishment is itself a product of middle-class dynamics. The term *middle class* itself, seen in relation to upper and lower, can be seen as a precise reflection, or even mimesis, of a view issuing from the emotional conviction that *hero-father-shaman* determines the nature of sociological behavior because it imitates cosmological behavior. With regard to Jesus' statement, then, to become as a little child is too often seen theologically as re-establishing the *true* relationship: coming once again under the dominance of the hero-father-shaman dream. But the psychedelic experience stands as a "threat to a frightened clientele" because it rejects the authority of this dream. The "flower children" undertake their *own* hero-journey—which means leaving the father and going to a far country. The fathers, of course, say they are wastrels. But the children, upon their return, say: "I have experienced a new and more meaningful relation to the cosmos and my fellows than *your* stories ever hinted at."

Seen more positively, and in the light of its being a call for each man to undertake his own hero-journey, the psychedelic experience offers the possibility of delivering the subject, with all of the risks and dangers pointed to by Campbell's description, into experiences of what Bachelard has called intimate immensity and what Baudelaire has described as the "entire immersion in the oneirism of music" and "solitude with an immense horizon." These are crucial elements in the psychedelic experience and are dramatically illustrated in the following report. It is part of a longer account, written some sixteen to eighteen hours after the ingestion of 250 micrograms of LSD, describing the subject's own experience:

I experienced myself as rhythmic, pulsating flesh, like a heart in a womb-like structure. It felt as if I were swimming in the belly of a huge fish. This constant and pulsating movement and countermovement had the quality, I remember thinking

at the time, of what Heraclitus must have meant by universal flux. It was all totally engrossing and undifferentiated. Then all of a sudden the experience articulated itself into the most distinct and finely etched image-feelings. I was in the midst of a high vaulted cathedral: pillars sunk into the very depths and reaching to the zenith, where in some strange way bottom and top became one; a skull at the base of the central pillar, from the mouth of which issued music, sounding from afar; rising, becoming lighter, following sweep outward to flying buttresses, to the tip, turning into growing, blooming, explosive sprays of flowers, each spray itself repeating the movement in an infinite division of growth, the spray becoming sea-spray and dropping to the ocean below, being caught up in the great sea and returned then to the sand, to the depths, then the cycle started over again. Part of the experience here was, at the same time the undifferentiated quality, the identity of cathedral, me, and the music, as if we were simply one energy field. The music started dancing through my body at the toes, wound itself upward to the solar region where it whirled round and round in vortex fashion, then shot up my spine and into my mouth where it was amplified in painful-pleasurable fashion by my teeth, then up the base of the skull and to the top of my head where it exploded, only to drop down to my toes and start up again.

In religious terms, the account is archetypal in its imagery. A particularly striking correspondence, for example, is to be found with the imagery and dynamics of Tantric Yoga as described by W. Y. Evans-Wentz in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*:

The initial aim of the practitioner of Yoga is to awaken what in the Tantras is called Serpent Power, personified as the Goddess Kundalini. It is in the Muladhara-chakra, at the base of the spinal column . . . that this mighty occult power lies coiled, like a serpent asleep. Once the Serpent Power is aroused into activity, it is made to penetrate, one by one, the psychic-nerve centres, until, rising like mercury in a magic tube, it reaches the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain-centre. Spreading out in a fountain-like crest, it falls thence as a shower of heavenly ambrosia to feed all parts of the psychic body.<sup>23</sup>

The similarity of imagery and dynamics is of more than aesthetic, psychological, or even religious interest. It points to what I, at least, see as common meanings in both ecology and the psychedelic experience. Both involve—in different ways to be sure, but equally forcefully nevertheless—movements from separateness, distinctness, and abstraction, into completeness, fullness, and concreteness. Both thrust one into an awareness of the interconnectedness of things and thus a deliverance from bondage to the dichotomy of inner and outer, mind and matter, subject and object. Both, that is to say, entail a vision, almost a mystical experience, of the totality of everything that is, the mystery of the All.

Both the ecological and the psychedelic involve a renewed sense of the presence of body. They are modes of interpretation and experience which reflect the radically renewed sense of body. In ecology and the psychedelic experience (there are others to be sure) we are seeing, participating in, a resurrection of the body. Both have, as it were, a common vocation: the vocation of spelling out what it means to be in the world as body. Modern science, under the tyranny of Cartesian and Newtonian models from which it has only recently been delivered, has denatured body insofar as it lets body be there only as an object of aggression to be controlled and manipulated for subjective purposes dissociated from the environment of the All. Modern theology, under the tyranny of essentialistic and spiritualistic models from which it is in the process of being delivered, has disembodied self insofar as it lets self be there only as subject under God. In this situation, ecology and the psychedelic experience can be seen as beginning to accomplish two things. Ecology seeks to restore nature and thus replace man, both intellectually and aesthetically, in his natural habitat. The psychedelic experience seeks to restore man to himself and thus replace man in deeper and more satisfying relationship to the totality of his environment.

In summary, I see the connection between ecology and the psychedelic experience in the following specific ways.

1. Both have a concern for exposing false understandings of the man-nature relationship. This common concern is

rooted in the realization that the life of self and the life of community are intimately and reciprocally related: false understandings on either side issue in harm and pain for both.

2. Both have a concern for facts, that is, for describing what is the case of man and nature. Further, both are concerned to develop systems of understanding and appropriate control which nourish, and do not interfere with what is the case.

3. Both have a concern for creating a new vision as prerequisite to understanding and action. That is, both ecology and the psychedelic experience see the need for *cessation* of action in order to provide the possibility of experiencing a new vision.

4. Both have a concern for organism in totality, and articulate this concern in terms of interrelatedness, process, systems of energy flow and transformation, all of which is rooted in the new vision of the totality of what is.

5. Finally, both ecology and the psychedelic experience have a common and fundamental concern for *transformation*. That is, the concerns for exposing false conceptions, for facts, for new visions, and for organism in totality are concerns organized around the possibility of delivering man from the pain and suffering he has inflicted upon himself environmentally and personally.

Now, in conclusion, what can be said regarding the implications of these concerns for ecological and psychedelic approaches to theology?

### *Implications for Theology*

In the introduction it was suggested that one of the fundamental challenges, if not *the* challenge, facing theology was that of transforming itself into an art of powerful story-telling. There are two assumptions underlying this.

First of all, every culture seems to require some story which gathers into itself in condensed form an account of beginnings, present and remembered happenings, and end-

ings in terms of which the fundamental questions and problems of human existence in that culture are illuminated. That is, there is a *myth* function essential to the continuing *socio-personal* function of every culture. This myth function has been described by Joseph Campbell: "In the long view of the history of mankind," Campbell says, "four essential functions of mythology can be discerned":

The first and most distinctive—vitalizing all—is that of eliciting and supporting a sense of awe before the mystery of being. . . .

The second . . . is to render a cosmology, an image of the universe. . . . The cosmology has to correspond, however, to the actual experience, knowledge, and mentality of the culture folk involved. . . .

A third function of mythology is to support the current social order, to integrate the individual organically with his group; . . .

The fourth function of mythology is to initiate the individual into the order of realities of his own psyche, guiding him toward his own spiritual enrichment and realization. . . .<sup>24</sup>

The first assumption, then, underlying the assertion in the introduction that theology's challenge is that of transforming itself into the art of powerful story-telling is that such an art, functioning in the ways just described by Campbell, is essential for our culture.

The second assumption is this: granting that not only theology itself but also the stories, images, and symbols of the Judeo-Christian tradition are being called constantly into question, it still seems clear that *for the time being* the stories of the Judeo-Christian tradition (the Bible) and theology (the art of telling those stories) will continue to serve as our basic *mythos*. That is, no other tradition of story-telling fulfills for us, for the time being, the fourfold myth function. The phrase "for the time being" is important because probably the stories of our religious tradition, even more than is the case now, will be superseded. This is all to the good, I think. Once they cease to be believed, once they are no longer sanctioned as the paradigm of the hero-journey for our cul-

ture, *then* their genius can be released from the bottle in which it has been imprisoned. *Then* their relevance to life in all of its natural, personal, developmental dynamics can be seen more clearly. What I am suggesting, then, is that the *death* of the stories of the Judeo-Christian tradition is the absolutely necessary prerequisite to their *rebirth* as a lively, enjoyable, illuminating story which plays upon the basic structure of our common life.

The point of exploring the meanings of ecology and the psychedelic experience has been to see if these approaches can assist in the process of the death and rebirth of theology so as to facilitate its transformation into powerful story-teller for our culture. I must admit that, at this stage, I am uncomfortable with the phrase "our culture"—as if it were separate from "other" cultures. Since, for example, I have—as do countless others—music from India and Africa in my record collection and since, through the transistor radio I carry in my brief case, I can be in immediate touch with everything reported from the whole world, I am not sure "my" or "our" culture can be spoken of as a separate reality. Insofar as it can, it is basically the construction of historical, sociological, and anthropological imagination. In other words: the phrase "our culture" is being called into question by the re-creation of the global village, via electronics, as pointed to by such critics as McLuhan. Nevertheless, the intention remains: How does what has been said about ecology and the psychedelic experience contribute to the task of helping theology to become "our culture's" story-teller?

Basically there are two responses to this beyond what has been said thus far either explicitly or implicitly.

An ecological approach to theology should help theology to rediscover two functions which for various reasons it has forgotten: its catholic function and its ecumenical function. "Catholic," according to its Greek roots, means "according to the whole": that is, the *whole world*. Ecology is catholic in the sense that it, too, is concerned with the whole and all of its systems of interrelatedness and communication. Theology understood as *catholic* is ecological insofar as it sees *no*

community isolated from the whole. But the whole understood in this ecological-catholic sense is not simply a metaphysical abstraction. A second function ecology helps theology to recover is to be found in the root word common to both ecology and ecumenical: namely, the Greek word for "household." Etymologically, at least, both ecology and ecumenics are concerned with the whole as manifested in communal household, in organism and body in relationship.

An ecological approach to theology, then, would require theology in its story-telling, to *renew its concern for the whole*. In many respects this has been accomplished—especially in the theological concern for interrelationships in the *political* community. But in its concern for this, theology has fallen woefully short of the kind of renewed concern for the whole that ecology is challenging it to develop. The first is the realm of nature: in the face of the theoretical achievements of science—and now, especially, the science of ecology—theology must run the risk of heresy (which after all is no risk any more) in order to redefine its attitude toward nature and the natural. (Insofar as I understand them, Teilhard de Chardin's works are attempting this, but my knowledge of Teilhard is too limited to do anything beyond acknowledging his importance in this context.) The second realm theology has neglected, and to which ecology's challenge to a renewed sense of wholeness is calling it, is that of the self. I suggest this in spite of the fact that pastoral theology has tried, with more courage than success, to relate theological modes of self-dynamics to various contemporary psychological perspectives. Also, I realize that the works of the Niebuhrs, Tillich, and Buber have been concerned with the question of the self. But, with the exception of a few critics working in the area of theology and the arts, theology and the history of religions, and theology and psychology, the question of the self is being largely ignored in contemporary theology. This leads us into the question of the meaning of a psychedelic approach to theology.

It is difficult to speak of a psychedelic approach to theology because it sounds, in suggesting such an approach, as if the

use of the psychedelic substances themselves is being urged. I hope it is clear that this is not the case. I must say, however, that, under appropriate conditions, it is clear that the (to use a more neutral word) psycho-active substances such as marijuana and LSD do not constitute the danger they have been represented as being in sensational press coverage. There has simply not been enough research to substantiate the charges of mortal danger. In any event, in speaking of a psychedelic approach to theology I am *not* suggesting that theological faculties and students use marijuana and LSD as a way of re-ordering the theological vocation—though any realistic appraisal would certainly indicate that more and more theological students have undergone the ordeal. What I *am* suggesting is this: the *dynamics* of the psychedelic experience (as interpreted in "Ecological and Psychedelic Meanings," pp. 145 ff., above) reveal a viable and creative approach to the task of redefining and enlarging the theological vocation. This is clear in two respects.

In the first place, a theology informed by the dynamics of the psychedelic experience would require that theological words, the act of story-telling, become *mantric*. A most compelling description of the word as mantric is given by Heinrich Zimmer:

it is compulsion to form a pictorial image compelling beings to be as they are in their innermost essence. It is therefore knowledge, it is mutual inherence of knower and known . . . it is compelling force; magical instrument by which immediate reality—appearance of gods, the play of mystical powers—is wrought. . . . Mantra is power, not arguing and proposition. . . . Whatever is pronounced in *mantra* is an event. If anywhere, then words are deed in this realm.<sup>25</sup>

This understanding of the word and its power is not, of course, alien to Judeo-Christian understanding. One has only to remember the creation story in Genesis and the prologue to John's Gospel. But this understanding of the word has been forgotten by theology. Theology has allowed itself to fall under the classification of a "secondary language," the meta-language of religious experience itself. But if theology is to



be transformed into the art of powerful story-telling, then it must recover the mantric sense of the word. The psychedelic dynamic helps in this rediscovery to the extent that word and experience are not dissociated. To speak of theology as *mantric*, therefore, is to see that theology in *telling* its story *becomes* the story.

The second implication for theology offered by the dynamics of the psychedelic experience is to be found in the way in which the psychedelic experience forces a journey from the constructions of the common-sense-language world to the world that is the case *beyond* convention and invention. Again: this is not alien, necessarily, to the Judeo-Christian tradition. This tradition is a constant and powerful call to rebirth, repentance, reordering, reunderstanding—all of which involve a temporary leaving of the ordinary world of presumably stable definitions and guidelines. Leaving aside textual and historical considerations, the dynamics of the imagery of three fundamental stories in the Judeo-Christian tradition show this: the Hebrew experience in the wilderness, Jesus' own experience in the wilderness, and Jesus' descent into hell. In each case (as pointed to in the description of the hero-journey by Campbell) the "winning of the prize" presumes the forsaking of one world and temporary habitation in another, strange and alien, where the healing presence bestows its gift if the contest is successfully consummated. But, also again, theology has forgot this dimension of its vocation. If it is to become a teller of stories so that "the story itself constitutes help" then theology must, in the telling of its story, facilitate the journey of leaving the world so as to re-enter it anew.

R. D. Laing in his book *The Politics of Experience* provides a structure which helps in understanding this. In discussing the possible therapeutic benefits of schizophrenia to both the individual and the body politic, Laing describes a journey of leaving and returning.

- (i) a voyage from outer to inner,
- (ii) from life to a kind of death,
- (iii) from going forward to going back,

- (iv) from temporal movement to temporal standstill,
- (v) from mundane time to eonic time,
- (vi) from the ego to the self,
- (vii) from outside (post-birth) back into the womb of all things (pre-birth),

and then subsequently a return voyage from

- (1) inner to outer,
- (2) from death to life,
- (3) from the movement back to a movement once more forward,
- (4) from immortality back to mortality,
- (5) from eternity back to time,
- (6) from self to a new ego,
- (7) from a cosmic fetalization to an existential rebirth.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, and in conclusion, I would say that ecological and psychedelic approaches to theology involve the following:

1. In the first place these approaches necessitate a redefinition, theologically, of the relationship between man and nature. Ecology requires this from the point of view of a scientific discipline which sees that the aggressive, manipulative mode of operating *upon* nature in the context of the mind-body, spirit-nature, subject-object dichotomy is leading to disaster, if in fact it has not issued already in irremedial chaos. The psychedelic phenomenon requires this redefinition in terms of positing the necessity of deliverance from an over-rationalized, fundamentally alienated cultural symbol system—in which theological modes of interpretation have participated and to the development of which they have contributed—into a realm of direct participation in body presence and experience where the ordinary safeguards of cultural sublimation and defense are no longer operative.

2. Ecological and psychedelic approaches to theology require theology to redefine *itself*: ecology from the point of view of its own conceptual task, the psychedelic phenomenon from the point of view of its experiential dimensions, and both together from the point of view of their common acknowledgment, both explicitly and implicitly, of man's

rational awareness as the only basis upon which transformation of environment and self can proceed.

Or, to put it still another way:

3. Ecology seeks a restoration of nature by means of scientific man who has ruined nature. Thus for ecology to accomplish its task involves a prior *metanoia* by scientific man (i.e., contemporary-Western, advanced-industrial-civilization man) to save his efforts from compounding the very problem he seeks to solve.

4. The psychedelic experience seeks a restoration of *self* in the midst of a nature which is corrupted and a rationality which has produced that corruption. Thus for psychedelic experience to work requires momentary but transformative deliverance from the prevailing corruption. This deliverance may be the required *metanoia* and theology its story-teller.

#### NOTES

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5. Timothy Leary, *The Politics of Ecstasy* (New York, 1968).
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24. Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* (New York, 1964), pp. 519-521.
25. This passage is quoted in A. Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition* (London, 1965), p. 106.
26. R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (New York, 1967), p. 89.

# The Gospel as Power: Explorations in a Theology of Social Change

Thomas W. Ogletree

Making his second appearance in the *New Theology* series—the first was in No. 6—Thomas Ogletree is concerned to develop a doctrine of God that takes account of and relates to contemporary social, political, and cultural revolutions, especially as these are fostered and furthered by students and the black poor. It is Ogletree's contention that, "far from being the pure and self-sufficient ruler of history from above, God unfolds his being precisely as the concrete dynamic within history that thrusts man toward liberating forms of life, that empowers man to participate in the creation of a new order of freedom." Part of a series of papers presented at the Fourth Oxford Institute of Theological Studies in the summer of 1969, Dr. Ogletree's essay later appeared in the Spring 1970 number of the *Ilf Review*;<sup>\*</sup> all of the Institute papers will be included in *The Living God*, a volume edited by Dow Kirkpatrick and scheduled for publication in 1971 by Abingdon Press. Associate Professor of Theology at Chicago Theological Seminary, Dr. Ogletree has written *Christian Faith and History: A Critical Comparison of Ernst Troeltsch and Karl Barth* and *The Death of God Controversy*. He is also the editor of the recent work *Openings for Christian-Marxist Dialogue*.

The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the highest being for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a degraded, enslaved, neglected, contemptible being.<sup>1</sup>

KARL MARX

Jesus opened the book and found the place where it was written:

<sup>\*</sup> 2201 S. University, Denver, Colo. 80210.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
 because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor,  
 He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
 and recovering of sight to the blind,  
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
 to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

IN THIS ESSAY I hope to lay the foundations for a constructive reinterpretation of the doctrine of God. Two principal concerns will characterize this effort. First, I will seek to articulate what I take to be the reality of God within the context of contemporary struggles—especially among students and the black poor—for a more humane social order. What I have to say about God forms an integral part of a theology that self-consciously seeks to serve and facilitate human efforts to change the world.<sup>3</sup> Whatever may be said generally about the value and significance of social change, the Christian gospel will have become illusory, self-deceptive, and hollow if its workings are not now manifest in the elemental conflicts which thrust upon contemporary man the necessity of a basic reordering of human society. If the rich legacy of much recent Protestant theology currently seems irrelevant or even meaningless, it is because the contexts and emphases that once gave that theology its vitality are relatively remote from the whirl of events which presently promise to affect most decisively the future quality of human life either for good or for ill. My aim is to uncover the workings of the gospel in these events, and in the process to attest the presence of God in human history. The realization of this aim finally requires a more thoroughgoing theological interpretation of social processes than has up to the present time been achieved. In the spirit of Marx, it involves a type of theological reflection that emerges out of concrete practice, particularly practice consciously directed toward effecting a reordering of human society. Equally important, it involves disciplined and systematic analysis of social real-

ity with a view to discovering the social bases of human suffering and the conditions under which the removal of these bases of suffering becomes a realistic possibility.

The second principal concern, which is integrally related to the first, is to attend more carefully to the task of identifying and describing the kinds of situations and experiences that most appropriately give rise to a notion of God. This task includes a consideration of how these situations and experiences, together with their theological illumination, actually function in the social process. My intent is to avoid moving too quickly to the logical problems of a doctrine of God without first having a clear perception of the experiential data which make the resolution of those problems humanly significant. The limitation of this procedure is that it tends to omit from consideration many elements that legitimately belong to a more fully developed understanding.

My focus will be on experiences and understandings which I take to be positive and creative. That is to say, I will not attend to situations and understandings that result in conceptions of God which function as "excuses" either to flee from concrete, earthly, social responsibility or to defend with moral fervor an unjust social order. The analysis of such conceptions is also an important part of the doctrine of God, for it concerns the "unmasking of idols," primarily through a form of "ideology criticism." Even so, my own emphasis will be on the positive, constructive task. To be more specific, language about God will be linked to concrete happenings within the social process which in incalculable ways release creative, new energy in men by which they are enabled to transcend the destructive limits of their old situation and enter into the realization of new possibilities of human fulfillment. In keeping with this accent, the primary category for expressing the divine reality is "creative power," a category which gains concreteness in relation to the problems of power present in social and political processes. Such a perspective dramatizes the connection of God with contingent events, especially those which constitute new thrusts, new directions, in the human pilgrimage.

Correspondingly, God's role in the continuities and regularities of process, in patterns of "law," are inadequately assessed. Yet it is through the singular, the "miraculous," that the relation of God to the general and the "ordinary" can most adequately be perceived and interpreted. The attempt to speak of God in terms of creative emergents in human society risks what the Marxists call the "mystification" of experience. "Mystification" in this context means obscuring man's rigorous, clear-headed perception of his material situation by resort to the vague and misleading expressions of religious existence. My aim is to avoid such "mystification," primarily by unfolding a view of God in the context of a rigorous analysis of social processes. At the same time, I do not want to overlook the mystery which is genuinely there. Indeed, attentiveness to this mystery may even sensitize man to crucial elements in his situation which more prosaic, "objective" type analyses overlook, a fact which keeps me struggling with the doctrine of God.

My paper falls into three main sections: (1) a brief description of the efforts of blacks and radical students to bring about basic changes within contemporary American society; (2) an interpretation of the radical import of the ministry of Jesus Christ; and (3) suggestions about the nature of God's activity in contemporary life and the appropriate human response to that activity. The first part is an attempt to specify the context within which theological questions, including the question of God, can most appropriately be explored. The second part unfolds the traditions about Jesus and offers some basic christological formulations as a means of clarifying the theological content of significant movements in contemporary society. The final section brings these two emphases together explicitly in a discussion of Christian responsibility in relation to the working of God in human history.

## I

Christian theology must always be "practical theology." That is to say, as a work of disciplined and critical reflection,



it is not concerned with the achievement of an intellectually satisfying interpretation of experience, but with attesting, serving, and facilitating the promise of human fulfillment in the midst of man's concrete, worldly existence. While the architectonic perfection of a logical and coherent system of thought may in itself awaken deep aesthetic appreciation, man cannot live in such a system of thought, at least not without the repression of his fleshly being. He lives as a bodied self with basic physiological needs and drives in a material environment that in decisive ways is constituted by specific patterns of social interaction among men and by the values and meanings which guide and legitimate that interaction. It is within this concrete, worldly existence—with its conflicts, its burdens, and its terrors, but also with its satisfactions, its possibilities, and its promises—that man must find fulfillment if such fulfillment is to embrace the totality of his being. Because theology is a practical discipline, the proper context for its reflective activity is this concrete world of men, not some relatively autonomous intellectual or spiritual milieu. Likewise, the decisive test of its adequacy is whether it in fact illumines and furthers creative human struggle in this world for a situation that broadens and deepens the possibilities of human fulfillment. Canons of rational clarity, of consistency and coherence, apply most certainly to theology as to any systematic discipline, not, however, as intrinsic values, but as the preconditions of thought that is fruitful in illumining and guiding meaningful human activity.

The most important consequence of this understanding is that the theologian cannot choose his own agenda—certainly not on the basis of personal preferences, but also not simply in terms of problems residing in the theological tradition as such. Christian theology continually receives its agenda from the world, from the pressures, the thrusts, and the collisions of worldly developments, for it is only in relation to these developments that it can express and serve the Christian promise to men. The relevant developments are by no means always or even characteristically focused in the life and activity of the self-conscious community of faith. Instead of being the vehicle of God's redeeming presence in human history, the

church continually finds itself overtaken by events which expose its insensitivity to the explosive import of the gospel it is charged with bearing to men. Indeed, the church is often allied with forces which seek to frustrate or even destroy the liberating thrust of the work of God in Jesus Christ—all in the name of Jesus Christ! While this fact repeatedly confronts the church with the necessity of repentance, it should not in itself lead to despair about the possibility of faith. In the nature of the case, no actually existing human community can contain or even adequately serve the creative, transforming energy which the reality of Jesus Christ has released and continues to release in the midst of human history. Since Jesus Christ is eschatological occurrence, that concrete historical reality which bears and presses incessantly toward the end-goal of the world process, only a community which in its own historically conditioned concreteness embodies the same primal push toward the final fruition of existence can be a faithful witness to his work in the world. Yet precisely this eschatological vocation repeatedly surpasses the capacities of any actually existing individual or community. Every historical community inevitably seeks to domesticate the reality of Jesus Christ, to neutralize his nihilating power, in order that it might secure the continuity of its own existence on the basis of levels of fulfillment already achieved or of interests already realized. It withdraws from its vocation in the face of that death to the old which opens the way to the creation of new life. Even so, the final test of the church's faithfulness is not that it always be in the forefront of every creative new thrust in human history, but that it ever learn anew to read the "signs of the times," to discern "what God is doing in the world and to join in his work."

At the present time in American society, two principal developments embody most significantly the creative, forward push of the historical process and hence, the liberating power attested in the Christian promise: (1) the struggle of blacks for dignity and self-determination as men; and (2) the struggle of students, primarily within and through the university system, for new priorities, for new procedures of decision-

making and control, for new value orientations in the constitution of American society and in the unfolding of America's role in world affairs. Both of these movements began as protests against specific wrongs in American society and culture, wrongs which blacks and students experienced at a particularly deep level, but which did not in themselves undermine an essentially positive assessment of American life. For blacks the problem was the widespread denial of the full rights of citizenship. For students the issues were more diverse—ranging from the university's neglect of its teaching function to attempted regulation of student participation in activities of social protest. The movement of radical students gained its cutting edge, however, in opposition to the Vietnam war. Here America's military commitments, which themselves lacked adequate justification, profoundly threatened the vital interests of students, sensitizing large numbers of students to issues which had earlier been of concern only to an "avant-garde."

Yet as the protest activities of blacks and students unfolded, even achieving some specific victories, the full depth of the problems which initially provoked them began to manifest itself. No longer could these problems be understood as a limited number of secondary dislocations or maladjustments in a social system which generally facilitates human fulfillment; instead they showed themselves as indicators that the prevailing value orientations and the controlling institutional arrangements of the society as a whole present increasing dangers to the well-being of man. As a result, the legitimacy of the social system itself in its fundamental operations has come into question.

For black radicals this discovery basically reflects a heightened consciousness of an old problem—white racism. Progress in the achievement of civil rights has simply disclosed more pointedly the degree to which assumptions of white superiority continue to permeate American society and culture, providing a certain "legitimacy" to the disadvantages constantly imposed upon blacks. With the possible exception of the American Indians, no group coming to this land has

been so brutalized. Not only were blacks subjected to cruel physical abuse as they were captured and brought to America for sale as slaves; they were also ruthlessly deprived of any opportunity to preserve their African cultural heritage. Since persons from different tribes were judiciously mixed together, the only common language and common set of cultural patterns readily available to them in their new prison-home was the white man's culture, which in this case defined blacks as suitable only to be slaves. Indeed, for all practical purposes, blacks were forced to appropriate into their own personality structures the racist ideology of the white man as a precondition for survival itself!<sup>4</sup> Despite this brutal necessity, blacks managed to develop subtle styles of resistance and some patterns of cultural expression which enabled them to retain a measure of their dignity as men. Moreover, on a number of celebrated occasions they found the means to revolt against their masters, even though such an act meant almost certain death. Even after the Civil War brought an end to slavery, no serious attempts were made to compensate blacks for the violence done them. On the contrary, after a few gestures made during the reconstruction period in the direction of offering full citizenship to liberated slaves, systematic steps both quasi-legal and illegal were taken to perpetuate the servile role of blacks in the society. Only recently have these patterns been challenged with any degree of success, and then largely in a purely formal, legal sense.

As the pace of urbanization and industrialization accelerated in the early decades of the twentieth century, the white racist ideology made blacks very suitable candidates for what Marx called the "industrial reserve army"—i.e., a surplus of workers who could be utilized during full productivity, but laid off with impunity when productivity was low. Such a group could also be used to keep wages down and to frustrate the unionization of workers. Since advances in automation and recent successes in regulating the business cycle have reduced the importance of such "industrial reserves," the economic exploitation of blacks may no longer be as significant for the American social system as it once

was. In this respect conditions such as those which prevail in the urban ghettos may be advantageous only to fairly restricted groups of special interests which themselves do not play a vital role in the society as a whole. Still, there are powerful interests which are fully prepared to accept the continued degradation of blacks, at least by doing little or nothing to alter the present situation, in order that the resources of the society might be allocated in other, more immediately profitable ways. The racist ideology which once legitimated slavery now serves to justify this cynical disregard of human life.<sup>5</sup>

Because white racism is so pervasive, blacks in seeking to fulfill their aspirations as men cannot trust the channels which other Americans normally use to improve their situation or to obtain redress of their grievances. The channels themselves—in spite of their idealized interpretations—have proved to be instrumentalities which sustain and reinforce the very features of American society which black people must overcome. Given this situation, blacks can no longer simply work for a gradual movement into the mainstream of American society as it is presently constituted, particularly when this movement is individualistically understood. Since such a movement entails adaptation to the dominant culture, it not only isolates blacks once again from the creativity and humanity of their own unique experiences as black men, but it also continues in more subtle forms the old status of inferiority. Besides, even this movement is a realistic possibility only for the privileged within the black community, leaving untouched the overwhelming majority of the black poor. Consequently, for black people to affirm their dignity as men means to labor for a basic reordering of society. The society as a whole must be purged of racial definitions of human worth with their insidious legitimation of injustice. It must in general be made more responsive to vital human needs, a fact which makes the black struggle positively significant for all men. Yet the necessary measures for achieving such a transformation appear to many to be drastic indeed. Negatively, they involve attempts to subvert the effective func-

tioning of the most important institutions of contemporary American society, both passively through the withdrawal of support and actively through disruptive thrusts into the operations of the society. Positively, they involve the parallel development of alternative patterns of social organization and the creation of new cultural forms not so deeply implicated in the racism which has characterized the American experience. Among certain groups, especially within the urban ghettos, these efforts have now reached a stage which can appropriately be called prerevolutionary if not revolutionary in its implications for American society.<sup>6</sup> They gain added import in the fact that there is a growing awareness among blacks that they share a common cause with revolutionary movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America where the poor also suffer in varying degrees under the arrogance of American power.

In a different frame of reference the student movement has been approaching a similar position. Led essentially by privileged young people raised in liberal, democratic homes, it too has come to question the basic legitimacy of the systems of action through which decisions are made, priorities established, and resources committed in contemporary American society.<sup>7</sup> It is itself closely linked to the emergent black revolution, directly in black student caucuses, indirectly in the sympathy and support white radical students give to blacks in their struggle. Even so, the student movement has distinctive dimensions of its own. While the black struggle is directed chiefly against some unfinished business in American society—albeit in new forms resulting from such factors as increased technological unemployment, the large-scale migration of blacks to urban areas and the consequent flight of whites to the suburbs—the student struggle is focused on the issues raised by distinctively new developments in American life—quite specifically, the emergence of a permanent and powerful military establishment, but more generally, the growing tendency for the instrumentalities of decision-making and control to be concentrated in the hands of a “power elite.”<sup>8</sup> The problem is not simply that social and political power is concentrated in this fashion. It is also that the de-

cision-making process itself has become uncritical from the standpoint of basic value commitments. The general drift of the dominant tendencies in the technological development of the society is being allowed to continue without conscious reflection on the implications it has for the future quality of human life.<sup>9</sup>

Radical students have up to now confronted problems of contemporary American society primarily as they are refracted through the university system. This concentration reflects the fact that the university is itself an increasingly important determinant of the commitments and priorities of contemporary American society and is, therefore, increasingly answerable for the human quality of that society. In some respects this power is largely derivative, a result of the fact that the university has made itself a handmaiden of political, economic, and military interests—especially the latter—as a means of sharing in their affluence. At another level, however, it is clear that the technological sophistication of modern society has made the university a new kind of power factor in its own right simply because it has at its disposal many of the skills which have become indispensable to that society. Yet the problem is that the university—in spite of its rhetoric about free, critical inquiry and the dispassionate pursuit of truth—has not assumed responsibility for that power. It too has largely followed the drift of technological development, participating in the creation of mindless technicians and bureaucrats who allow themselves to be exploited by a system that is no longer responsive to the vital interests of men. Radical students are no more willing than blacks to be integrated into that society, to equip themselves to carry out efficiently and contentedly the roles it considers important and necessary. If the war in Vietnam and penetration of the university by military interests assume special significance for students, it is because they reveal in a particularly crude fashion the way in which the instrumentalities of modern industrial society are being utilized for projects that are essentially destructive of man's well-being, both for those who participate in the social system and for those who are more

directly victimized by it. As a result, radical students have also come to question the legitimacy of the contemporary American social system.

At this point, the interests of radical students and blacks come together, merging as well with the aspirations of oppressed peoples in the Third World. In all cases, the question is how modern industrial society can be made responsive to basic human values, how its instrumentalities can become channels of human fulfillment rather than vehicles of exploitation and domination. In all cases, there is a serious exploration of revolutionary-type strategies—in some instances, an unrelenting commitment to revolutionary action—as at least provisionally necessary in order to bring into being conditions sufficiently open to allow for the creation of new patterns of social organization, new forms of cultural expression, and new value orientations which can serve the realization of the human promise contained in the technological developments of contemporary society.

## II

It is not possible to give an adequate account of these developments within the limits of the present paper. My aim is, rather, to indicate the sense in which they pose concretely within contemporary American society the central issues of the Christian gospel and, by means of this interpretation, to identify those features in the historical process which most appropriately give rise to an understanding of God. In order to carry out this aim it is necessary to consider some of the "revolutionary" dimensions of Jesus' own ministry, particularly as they find expression in the synoptic traditions. On the one hand, the attempt to relate responsibly to the struggles of the black poor and radical students sensitizes one to elements in the New Testament portrayal of Jesus that are often overlooked. On the other hand, a fresh consideration of the import of Jesus' ministry sheds light on the significance of the promise contained in these struggles. In this respect, the whole complex of events associated with the name Jesus



Christ continues to function as the decisive paradigm for theological understanding even though that understanding must continually be developed within the context of a critical quest to share in the creative, liberating movements of a given time and place.

Jesus' citation of Isaiah in reference to his own activity provides an appropriate starting point for our reflections, since Jesus used Isaiah's words of promise to articulate a kind of platform for his total ministry: good news for the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty for the oppressed. The people in the synagogue at Nazareth were initially quite impressed with what Jesus had to say, especially in view of reports about his activities in other Galilean cities. Yet Jesus brutally rejected the easy praise of his fellow countrymen, emphasizing instead that few people even in a hungry time are open to receive the gift of life and health. What began as a happy homecoming ended as an angry confrontation. Either from experience or in anticipation of what was to come, Jesus seemed to realize that the talk of freedom becomes a profound threat for both the oppressed and the oppressors when it ceases to consist of beautiful abstractions and begins to express itself in terms of the social realities which in a given situation bind and violate the being of man.

The concrete meaning of Jesus' announcement of release to the captives, as it worked itself out in his specific first-century Palestinian setting, is highlighted most clearly in his clash with the Sabbath laws and with laws related to ritual purification. In this clash Jesus was in no sense merely challenging a few "blue" laws, which at worst were little more than a petty inconvenience. He was exposing a curious inversion of the legal tradition itself, which, on the one hand, claimed to embody the will of God and the basis of human fulfillment, but which, on the other hand, actually functioned both to obscure the thrust of God's intent and to oppress and cripple the spirit of man.<sup>10</sup> To use Marxist terminology, the legal tradition had become an ideology which masked a social reality quite different from that which it allegedly expressed and made possible. Jesus' word about the Sabbath

laws speaks directly to the point: the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.<sup>11</sup> Jesus was not saying, as any good Pharisee might say: the law must be obeyed *because* it is the instrument God has provided for man's well-being. He was, rather, asserting that at least in some of its expressions the law was functioning in a way that worked *against*, not for, man. Nor was Jesus content merely to raise theological questions about the law, perhaps as the basis for an academic discussion. Quite bluntly, he refused to obey these laws and encouraged his disciples to follow his example, an action which served concretely to subvert the authority of the legal tradition within the Jewish community.

Jesus' relation to the law was complex. He was certainly no simple antinomian. At times he seemed to radicalize the law by taking it to its logical conclusions, a process which itself had the effect of exposing the moral pretensions of the legal tradition.<sup>12</sup> At times he sought to peer behind the law in order to grasp its primary (human) intent.<sup>13</sup> At times he attempted to differentiate levels of authority within the law, pressing to the essential kernel embodied in the two great commandments.<sup>14</sup> Throughout, the problem was to clarify the *human measure* of the law, to uncover its patterns of order in their function as vehicles of human fulfillment, as channels which give direction for the creative investment of human energy. Insofar as the law failed to function in this way, insofar as it bound or repressed or enslaved the being of man, it had no claim to authority. Yet even these matters were never explored in a purely theoretical fashion, but always in the context of concrete efforts to undermine the destructive use of the legal tradition in first-century Palestine.

It is important to see that Jesus' assault on the legal tradition did not simply call into question the dominant value orientations of that society. It also challenged the patterns of social organization which were legitimated by that tradition—the role definitions of the society; the existing distribution of prestige, privilege, and authority within the society; the basic class structure of the society. By his words and deeds Jesus exposed the "authority" of those who were

reputed to be something as a bogus authority. The Pharisees and Sadducees understood this fact quite well. As a result they soon found themselves in a deadly conflict with Jesus. If Jesus were to succeed in following through on the central thrust of his ministry, their very place in the society would be undermined. For the sake of their own survival and the survival of the order which provided them with their security and prestige, Jesus had to be silenced or removed from the scene!

It must be emphasized that when Jesus charged the Pharisees and Sadducees with hypocrisy, he was not simply questioning the sincerity or earnestness of these men. Doubtless his opponents could credibly claim both of these virtues and in a higher degree than many of the "people of the land" with whom Jesus identified so closely. Jesus was calling into question the basic legitimacy of the *roles* these men played in the society and with it the traditions which gave those roles their significance. To overcome hypocrisy in such a case involved nothing less than a recasting of the basic roles of the society in a manner more relevant to the liberation and healing of men. For the defenders of tradition, on the other hand, Jesus' activity most surely appeared as chaotic, as activity calculated to open the floodgates of order to violent passions that would inevitably inundate the whole society.

Jesus himself had no illusions about the shortcomings of the "people of the land." Many were demoralized people who had come to accept society's definition of their lives as sinful, degraded, and unclean. Since they experienced the standards of worth and righteousness expressed in the law as unattainable, at least for men who shared their situation, and since they knew no alternative routes to human dignity, they had little choice but to concede and to internalize in their own self-understanding the assessment of their lives which was normative for the society. Being forced to bear the label of worthlessness, many naturally yielded to the law's assault on their dignity by falling deeper into degradation either through their own will or through the lack of will. Jesus addressed these people by calling them to repentance. And yet it would

not suffice to call them from a life of degradation and despair to a strict observance of the authoritative legal tradition. That would simply subject them once again to the traditions and the social system which had crushed their spirits in the first place! Rather, the call to repentance which was addressed to the degraded and the broken had to be tied inseparably to an unrelenting assault on the legal traditions and the patterns of authority which had contributed so decisively to that degradation and brokenness.<sup>15</sup> Only through such a double-pronged attack could a new basis for human dignity, freedom, and health be established.

Since Jesus' ministry bore within it the promise of a qualitatively new order of life, the question of his authority was highly problematic.<sup>16</sup> Who was he that he could both summon sinners to repentance and also assail the structures by which the destructive force of human sin was normally judged and held in check? On what basis could he challenge the representatives of the order "God" had established among men and at the same time claim to be a teacher of righteousness? Even though his followers later saw him as the fulfillment of the central impulse of both the law and the prophets, Jesus could not appeal directly to these traditions as the basis of his authority, for his opponents were already acknowledged to be their authoritative interpreters. The only possibility was to let the creative force of his own ministry, its power to heal and to liberate, establish its own authority. In this respect, Jesus was a classic example of what Max Weber calls a charismatic leader. In keeping with this fact, a response to what Jesus was doing characteristically took the form of a response to his person. The issue was whether one would be loyal to Jesus, whether one would follow him faithfully in his words and deeds. Only through such loyalty could the basis of a new order of freedom be established.

As a general rule it can be said that no genuinely creative breakthrough in any realm of life—whether religion, politics, science, or art—can be established on the basis of previously existing canons of authority. Precisely because of its novelty, it brings into being new canons, new standards, new

principles for evaluating human activity and for ordering and channeling the energies of men. It is the very nature of such creativity to have something of a charismatic quality. This charisma, moreover, is itself usually ambiguous. It invariably discloses inadequacies in the established patterns of order. It shows that these patterns in significant ways function more as barriers which block man's elemental energies than as channels which focus and direct those energies. In transcending these patterns, it introduces relative chaos into the processes of life as the precondition for creating new, more fruitful forms of organization. Yet in its chaotic power it may prove to be more destructive than liberating, bringing into being forms of order more limiting than those which it replaced. In this respect it is always legitimate to suspect charismatic figures and movements of being demonic. In fluid situations there is always an overabundance of claimants to leadership, many of whom mislead rather than aid their fellow men. Jesus' own ministry reflects this ambiguity. As a result, the decision to trust him inevitably contained significant elements of risk. Still, it would be false to describe such trust as a blind and essentially irrational leap of faith. An act of this kind could in no case be a mature, human act. Ideally this trust rested upon a deep experience of healing and liberating processes at work in Jesus' ministry, processes that were profoundly relevant to the suffering which existing forms of life imposed upon men. By trusting him, by remaining loyal to him, his followers were already enabled to participate in some measure in the new reality he attested.

It has often been argued that Jesus' ministry was anything but revolutionary in any concrete, social sense. The principal evidence for such a contention centers in Jesus' apparent acceptance of Roman sovereignty in Palestine. He refused to be pushed into a direct clash with the Roman state and apparently rejected vigorously the aims and activities of the Zealots, the "real" revolutionaries of the period. We cannot reconstruct historically all of the elements which shaped Jesus' response to these issues. They are closely bound up with the question of how Israel's mission to the

world was to be understood. Jesus' own view seemed to be that Israel's world mission presupposed the transformation of Israel herself. Consequently, he repeatedly stressed his prior responsibility to the "household of faith"—though to be sure, not to the synagogue or to the temple within the society, but to all aspects and dimensions of the life of the Jewish people!<sup>17</sup> The point could be put somewhat differently. Without denying the reality of Roman oppression, the more crucial source of bondage and degradation within first-century Palestine seemed to have been not the Roman occupation as such, but the forms of social organization and the patterns of value orientation which reigned within the Jewish community itself and on the basis of Israel's own religious traditions! If this is the situation Jesus encountered, then a national liberation movement such as that envisioned by the Zealots would not have touched the basic issues in the suffering of the people—at least not as Jesus understood those issues. It might have replaced Pilate with a Jewish king, but otherwise all would have remained the same.

Contemporary revolutionary thinkers generally believe that movements of national liberation must precede the revolutionary transformation of the internal dynamics of a social order. At this point, they invert what seems to have been the order of Jesus' activity—perhaps because modern forms of imperialism have more substantive implications for the internal structure of colonial societies than was true in the Roman empire, but perhaps because experience has shown that national independence is a prerequisite for meaningful change within a society and not vice versa. Still, current experience also shows the inadequacy of a merely nationalist revolution so far as the elemental experience of men in the life of a society is concerned. Such revolutions often mean simply that colonial masters have been replaced by nationals who themselves share the values, the styles of life, and the interests of their colonial predecessors. Otherwise, the society remains virtually unchanged.<sup>18</sup>

So far as we can see, Jesus was not in any immediate and direct sense a revolutionary with respect to Roman authority.

But with respect to the traditions and patterns of social organization which prevailed within his own community, his work was most certainly revolutionary in its thrust. Had he been a purely spiritual preacher about an otherworldly Kingdom or about some inward, existential transformation of life without special social consequences, the manner of his death would be largely unintelligible. I submit that the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians knew very well what they were doing when they plotted to kill Jesus! All that they had and all that they valued were at stake in that action.

In large measure Jesus' ministry, understood in these terms, was a failure. Perhaps he must be labeled naïve, a man who refused to face realistically what was and was not possible in his situation. Perhaps he was a desperate man, no longer able to bear the degradation and suffering which had been thrust upon himself and his people. With the urgency and determination which only deep suffering can give, he assailed the structures of death which had for so long lain heavily upon his people, until the meaning of these structures was dramatically exposed in his own crucifixion. According to the Synoptics, Jesus anticipated this end. Indeed, his recorded comments are laden with expressions of defeat and frustration, so much so that the only hope which could have had significance for him was one which had the power to encompass death and frustration and to transform them into triumph.

If Jesus' public ministry was not free of ambiguity, his death was even more problematic. The apparent extent of his impact on the Palestinian population, coupled with the circumstances of his death, meant that large numbers of people could scarcely avoid taking some sort of stance toward him and his activity. The easiest and most natural response would, of course, be to distance oneself from Jesus, to stand over against him, in varying degrees even to condemn him. This response might reflect a more or less sincerely held conviction that Jesus was a menace to Israel, one who threatened to destroy the order God had provided as the means of his people's salvation. The leaders who opposed Jesus apparently saw matters that way, even if their viewpoint also masked an

interest in protecting their own privilege within the society. Others might withdraw from Jesus' death not so much because they considered him dangerous as because they considered his case essentially hopeless, because they believed that nothing significant could be done to change the patterns of social life no matter how oppressive they might be. Jesus' death in this case would simply prove the futility of opposition. Both of these responses meant in practice that man must continue to link his well-being to the existing order of life, even when that order crippled and distorted his spirit.

The alternative response was to identify with Jesus' death, to see it as a disclosure in the sharpest and most dramatic form of the death one already suffered daily under the existing conditions of life. Such an act of identification did not concern a purely subjective choice of a hero of faith, a kind of existential leap into authenticity occasioned by a concrete instance in which one man embraced his own death in sovereign freedom. It concerned a liberating insight into the fact that Jesus' death uncovered a social and spiritual death which all men in that particular setting in fact suffered whether they realized it or not, a death embodied in the oppression and bondage which reigned through the dominant value system and the patterns of organization of that society. In this connection the issue was no longer merely whether one correctly perceived the meaning of these social realities and Jesus' relation to them, but whether one found in the life and death of Jesus the resources one needed to lay hold of the new possibilities of life to which they pointed. Failing to find such resources, a man had little choice but to make his peace as best he could with the prevailing order, which necessarily included rejecting the truth Jesus opened up. The paradox is that those who embraced Jesus' death as their own death, who received it as a death "for their sakes," were empowered to participate in the creation of new forms of life which surpassed the destructive limits of the old.

This empowering of the powerless is at the heart of the Easter miracle, not some spectacular occurrence whose principal significance is to evoke amazement. Actually, there



are a number of New Testament traditions which may be variant forms of the same "Easter" phenomenon—traditions concerning the transfiguration of Jesus, the empty tomb, the appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. All point concretely in the same direction—to the liberating, energizing power of the cross in human life.

The most crucial development to be noted is that at some point, perhaps very shortly after Jesus' death, the import of Jesus' activity burst through the limits of its particular Palestinian setting, taking on world-historical importance. This development rested in part on the fact that the Jewish people by and large "rejected" Jesus. Such rejection may well have reflected the good common sense of the folk, for while Jesus may indeed have borne the truth, that truth probably would have had little chance to come to fruition if its concrete reference to the Palestinian situation had been strictly maintained. Even if the internal life of the Jewish people had been revolutionized, the Jewish community would inevitably have become a threat to Roman sovereignty, provoking repressive action—as in fact later happened in response to an essentially nationalist revolution. Even though Israel's pilgrimage provided the fertile soil for the concrete emergence of the liberating power present in the activity of Jesus, the promise contained in that power could be realized only if it worked on a much broader front, finally encompassing the Roman Empire itself as the widest effective organization of human resources existing in that time and place.<sup>19</sup>

It was precisely in the separation of the cross of Jesus from exclusive attachment to the Palestinian setting that its eschatological import became most visible. This event no longer signified simply the specific issues raised by Jesus with reference to Israel's legal traditions and the social order of which they were a part. It now exposed a conflict continually working itself out in the heart of the world process between every order which oppresses and the vital, energizing forces of life—a conflict manifest in varying ways in all levels of reality and in the most diverse forms of social organization.

As a result every conflict has in some measure come to participate in this pivotal conflict, enriching and extending its primal meaning. By the same token, the promise of Jesus' activity was no longer simply the reformulation of Jewish life through the creation of an order relatively more serviceable to the liberation and health of men. It came to bear the promise of that all-embracing order which is profoundly adequate to the explosive forces of creativity that comprise the movement of being in all its dimensions. The point is not simply that the cross together with the specific content of Jesus' activity is a particularly illuminating cipher of a universal principle operating in the world process. The cross, rather, bears in its central impulse that pattern of being which can overcome the destructive conflicts of life in the kingdom of freedom. Even though it maintains its own concreteness, it can in this sense be said to leap over the various struggles of history to their promised resolution. Still, this formulation is also misleading. It tends to suggest that the historical process is in principle already completed. The cross of Jesus is then seen as the finished product of that process, a wondrous accomplishment on behalf of all men which needs only to be acknowledged in order to be enjoyed. Yet precisely because the cross of Jesus Christ bears within itself the impulse to that liberating order which embraces all things, it can never be complete in itself. It finds its fulfillment only as all is fulfilled, only as all things themselves participate in its promise.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, such participation does not consist of a passive adaptation to the reality of Jesus Christ. The import of the cross of Jesus is not that everything has been done for man, but that man himself is empowered to labor with all his resources for the realization of the realm of freedom which the cross opens up. Since this participation is active, even originaive, the reality of Jesus Christ itself undergoes continual transformation in the historical process as it receives the varying contributions of those who are enabled through its operation to become its coworkers. Jesus Christ is eschatological occurrence not because history is essentially finished in him, but because he constitutes a new possibility

in the historical process whose creative potential cannot be exhausted short of the full actualization of that order which can adequately awaken, facilitate, and harmonize the vital energies operating in all things.

It is equally important that the inexhaustible potential concretely founded in the cross of Jesus Christ not be understood as an abstract standard of valuation which, as it were, judges history and lures it ever onward from a distant and ever receding horizon. Such an image too easily removes the import of Jesus Christ from the ambiguity and agony of the historical struggle. While the reality of Jesus Christ inaugurates a movement which presses relentlessly to the end, to the *telos* of history, we encounter that reality nowhere else than in the concrete struggles of our world—chiefly in those happenings which break through the limits of oppressive forms of life and open the way to new levels of creativity and freedom in the human pilgrimage.

In the foregoing analysis the meaning of God has been identified principally with the explosive power operating in the world process to enable creative growth. Implicit in the discussion is the conviction that this power is operative at all levels of being. Attention has been centered almost exclusively, however, on the relevance of the more general perspective for social and historical processes. In this frame of reference the working of God is most singularly manifest in the dynamics by which oppressive and degrading patterns of life are transcended for the sake of new forms of order better adapted to the task of evoking, channeling, and harmonizing the vital energies of men. The phenomenon of charisma as it is focused both in persons and in movements is a crucial part of these dynamics. The point is that at the levels of complexity which characterize human, social existence, only creative subjects can be sufficient to the task of giving shape to new forms and expressions of life. Insofar as this activity entails breaking with legitimated patterns of authority and venturing to bring into being new bases of authority, the new forms initially require vital and inspiring representation in persons if they are to gain their way among men. Conse-

quently, the working of God in the historical process is at critical times sharply concentrated in charismatic persons. Such persons are empowered by the working of God to break with the old in order to give birth to the new; they are also mediators of this same possibility for those with whom they interact in a common life situation. As a bearer of charismatic power, Jesus Christ is distinctive for the Christian community essentially in the eschatological import of his activity. That is to say, the creative impulses which have been and continue to be released in the complex of events which make up his being are not exhausted in the particular issues of first-century Palestine, but press in ever new ways and by means of ever new struggles toward that all embracing realm of freedom which is the goal of process.

In some respects this understanding stresses one-sidedly elements of conflict, dynamics, and change at the expense of harmony, order, and stability. It is being asserted that the creative breakthrough—especially within the social process—constitutes the prototypical experience underlying the reflections on the meaning of God here being offered. Still, creativity and form are not contraries. Creative energy which is in no way focused through significant patterns of organization expends itself without effect. Creative activity requires a framework of order to be fruitful. The most productive periods in human history have not necessarily been the transition periods in which old forms were forced to give way to new ones. Productivity has often been at its highest when more or less established patterns of activity themselves served to elicit an intensive and highly imaginative investment of life. These patterns could elicit that investment because of their success in channeling human energies in directions which made sense for the people living in that setting. Yet such patterns of order eventually exhaust their potential and begin to display repressive features of their own. Under these circumstances, creativity requires new forms in order to gain satisfactory expression. In terms of a highly abstract formulation, it can be said that the élan of the divine activity operative in and through the world process drives

relentlessly through innumerable stages and through many failures and sidetracks toward that pattern of order which not only no longer represses the vital energies of being, but elicits their free and creative articulation at the deepest and most intense levels possible. In trinitarian language, God the Father designates the primal, chaotic energy—somewhat on the analogy of the Aristotelian Matter—which from the beginning lusts after suitable forms for its boundless power. God the Son is the promise of that adequate form, present in the beginning as the indispensable counterpart of the creative potential in the divine chaos, decisively manifest in Jesus of Nazareth as the inexhaustible historical expression of the impulse toward liberating patterns of existence, but fully actual only in the fulfillment of the world process. The Spirit, the dynamic union of chaotic vitality and liberating form, embraces in its actuality the totality of the agony of process as the necessary pilgrimage in the self-actualization of the divine being.

### III

This highly abstract formulation is useful in providing a general orientation for man's concrete engagement with the particular issues of existence he confronts in his own situation. However, where it becomes in itself the central pre-occupation of theological reflection, it tends to become a spectator's interpretation of reality which is compatible with virtually anything that happens. Lacking specific consequences for human behavior, its most likely function is that of encouraging acceptance of what is already given. For this reason it has been necessary to move toward an understanding of God from a consideration of current happenings in which the pathos of the divine self-actualization is operative. It is to these happenings that I must now return.

The thesis of this paper is that blacks and radical students are raising in a most forceful and thoroughgoing way the central issues of the Christian gospel. In relation to the concrete realities of contemporary American society, their strug-

gle concerns the themes of the Isaiah passage cited by Jesus: release to the captives, recovery of sight for the blind, good news to the poor, liberty for the oppressed—and most especially, the announcement that *now* is the acceptable day of the Lord, i.e., the specific time in which these matters have become and must be the main order of business. Moreover, they have sought to raise these issues in ways that have concrete consequences, that have to do with how people act, how the roles of society are organized, what values operate in practice in the daily affairs of the basic institutions of the society.

Blacks are being called from degradation and humiliation, from the moral decay which is often the result of such degradation, to a new awareness of their dignity as men, to self-affirmation, to the responsibility and concern for others which such dignity makes possible. Yet this call to a new life itself gains substance only as it is inseparably linked with an assault on those structures and values which daily do violence to blacks, distorting, even crushing, the spirits of all but the strong. Indeed, the opportunity to share in the struggle for a new order itself provides the most favorable occasion in which a man can experience and affirm his worth at a new and more profound level. In this frame of reference, the brilliant survival techniques earlier developed by blacks—especially in religion, music, humor, and story-telling—no longer suffice in their old forms to express a vital humanity, for they were originally adapted to the harsh realities of slavery or racial discrimination. Now they too must undergo a transformation in order to sustain the militancy required to bring into being a new order of freedom.

The new black militancy is not simply gospel for blacks. Whites also suffer—though in different, less obvious ways—under the curse of racism! In the determined challenge to the structures and values by which blacks in particular are victimized, white men as well are addressed with a call to surrender the false bases of worth which distort their perceptions and inhibit their own fulfillment as men. This challenge is not a mere appeal to the white man's conscience, which

would scarcely suffice in itself to free them from the restricted views of their own self-interest which hold them captive. It encounters them as total men whose being is rooted in vital material interests. By confronting whites at those points where they are most immediately conscious of their own material interests, blacks give whites a realistic option to accept or even actively participate in a reordering of the basic institutions of the society in a manner more compatible with the well-being of men. As a result, the gospel is no longer merely verbal, merely a utopian ideal which can in no case find practical application in the "real" world. It takes on flesh. It becomes concrete in specific social and political struggles which present men with the necessity and the possibility of inquiring anew into the true nature of their interests, needs, and hopes as men, which give them an opportunity to develop patterns of social organization that can serve these interests and needs.

Similar dynamics are operative in the student movement. In some respects, radical students represent the first and most wholeheartedly positive white response to the challenge and promise of the black struggle. Having been sensitized to the human meaning of social processes, they have broadened the base of that struggle, exposing other dimensions in the enslavement of the human spirit that result from the dominant patterns at work in contemporary American society. Students have themselves been awakened from the contented enjoyment of a prolonged adolescence, from an uncritical adaptation in the course of university education to the secure roles the society offers them. They have been summoned to a probing inquiry into the threats and promises of modern industrial civilization. Because they have attained new levels of political sensitivity, they seek to confront the society as a whole with the inhumanity, the unfreedom, and the "bad news" which is present in its established conventions and procedures, hopefully giving it some genuine options to the steady drift toward technocratic captivity, toward the domination of a welfare-warfare state.

Because these movements had to break with legitimated

structures of authority in order to raise the human questions which claimed their attention, charisma has played a prominent role in their development both in leadership patterns and in styles of activity. Indeed, without charisma the kind of breakthrough that was required to make possible a meaningful treatment of contemporary problems could not have been achieved. Closely connected with this breakthrough has been the release of enormous amounts of creative energy directed toward the reformulation of the society. Indeed, the people attending most urgently and profoundly to the problems of overcoming oppression and of bringing good news to the poor are precisely those who would normally be least equipped to deal with such matters: on the one hand, those most brutalized and degraded by the society, those who are increasingly being excluded from a productive role in the society, those whom we would ordinarily expect to be too demoralized to care or hope; on the other hand, those destined for the most privileged and secure roles in the society, the new mandarins of the modern, technocratic society. To be sure, blacks and students have had every opportunity to know and experience the failings of modern society. Yet this awareness is no longer merely the latent fuel for social change. It has been ignited, becoming a burning determination to overcome the failings of the society. The Christian who has been conditioned to expect and hope for the redeeming activity of God in history can only respond to these developments with a sense of wonder and gratitude. In the words of Paul: "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."<sup>21</sup> Consequently, the promise contained in these developments confronts Christians in particular with a fresh call to responsibility amid the social and political realities of the contemporary world.

I do not wish to romanticize these movements or to exalt them uncritically. They have serious problems of their own.



Indeed, given the circumstances of their emergence, one could scarcely expect it to be otherwise. Some blacks and radical students, for example, tend to identify radicality merely with sweeping—even violent—assaults on anything that represents the established order. There is then little concern to guide action by critical insight into the social bases of human suffering and into the dynamics operating within the society which bear realistic possibilities for overcoming that suffering. Likewise, some participants in these struggles content themselves simply with disrupting or, they hope, destroying prevailing social processes. The painstaking task of devising new patterns of social organization which significantly improve the possibilities of human fulfillment is seriously neglected if not disregarded altogether. There are divisive tendencies within the movements themselves. The factions which see the least of value in existing institutions and the fewest possibilities of continuity in achieving meaningful change, often suspect other more “conservative” factions of “selling out” or of coming to terms too quickly with the established order. By holding out uncompromisingly for their own radical program, they tend to narrow the base of their appeal so much as to be incapable of any effective action. Their determination to accept nothing less than what they regard as a genuinely radical solution to human problems takes on added pathos when it embraces no clearly articulated social alternatives. Then its significance may be primarily psychological, reflecting the radical’s compulsive need to cleanse himself of the evil and corruption in the society—in practice to refuse modern civilization as such. As a result, the achievement of relative social health ceases to be a major concern.

These and similar tendencies have often been cited by critics of these movements, most often, it must be noted, by those seeking to discredit them and undermine the support they have from time to time received from the larger society. The aim of such criticism is basically to render ineffective potential sources of social change and to restore the normalcy which has been called into question. Yet criticism is neces-

sary if the promise of these movements as vehicles of change within the society is to be realized.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, if the tendencies noted above were to become dominant, the current efforts for a new social order would almost certainly be defeated, leaving the sufferers in deeper despair and the defenders of the present order more secure in their judgment that any social disturbance is bad for the society.

In this connection it must be made clear that to speak of God's action in history does not mean to absolutize or to embrace uncritically developments which are identified as peculiarly significant bearers of his presence. Nor does it mean that such developments are guaranteed certain or immediate success. On the contrary, it means that God himself is involved in the ambiguity, the uncertainty, and the questionableness of the historical process. Moreover, this involvement does not simply consist of God's external use of imperfect instruments in a manner that somehow preserves intact his essential perfection. God is implicated in his innermost nature in the distortions and fractures of history in the process of actualizing his own being. The primary significance of identifying particular historical phenomena as crucial expressions of God's activity is to underscore their creative potential for moving process toward forms of organization more adequate to the vital energy operative in human personal and social existence. Such developments even in their ambiguity and questionableness present man with concrete possibilities of overcoming particular forms of bondage and oppression, of actualizing in specific ways the promise of freedom which the gospel offers him. Far from being the pure and self-sufficient ruler of history from above, God unfolds his being precisely as the concrete dynamic within history that thrusts man toward liberating forms of life, that empowers man to participate in the creation of a new order of freedom.

The stress on God's immersion in process does not rule out the propriety of speaking of the perfection of his righteousness and love. God is "perfectly" righteous and loving, not in the sense that he is completely free of the ambiguities and impurities of history, but in the sense that his activity en-

ables developments in the various stages and circumstances of historical existence which are concretely appropriate to man's liberation and fulfillment. Moreover, his love and righteousness are such that his work is not and will not be finished until all bases of human suffering, bondage, alienation, and conflict are overcome. In social terms, this means that movements which expose forms of oppression and bondage in human social existence and which embody a drive to overcome that oppression and bondage cannot finally be put down. The problems which they uncover present themselves again and again until suitable steps are taken for their resolution. To have faith in God means to perceive and to participate in these dynamics against the background of what might be called ontological optimism, the conviction that frustration and defeat are not inescapable laws of life and that the hope of meaningful victories will be vindicated in future experience.

What are the concrete consequences of seeking to understand the divine working in relation to such developments in human society? What substantive contribution can a theological analysis make to our grasp of their reality and significance? In the first instance, the theological contribution to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues must be directed primarily toward the church, the self-conscious community of faith. It must be initially referred to the church, since these movements both in their inception and in their subsequent development have not by and large been explicitly derived from a Christian commitment. They are among the many instances in human history in which the principal agents of God's activity have been persons and groups other than his self-acknowledged servants. Before the church can presume to proclaim to the world the Christ who is already at work in the world, it must itself learn again of Christ from the world. It can learn of Christ only as it struggles with these contemporary expressions of his presence in such a way as to enlarge the possibility that their creative promise shall come to fruition. For the Christian community, the initial significance of the analysis is to identify the locus

of the divine working in current happenings and the shape of Christian mission within those happenings.

But how can Christians enter into these struggles? What form should their involvement take? The answer to these questions rests in considerable measure upon a critical assessment of the forces at work in contemporary American society—the consequences they have for human life, the promise they hold for the enlargement of human creativity and fulfillment. Such reflection must itself be directed and informed by concrete practice. In this case that involves participation in the sufferings of those whose life experiences expose most sharply the failings of human society and, hence, the factors which must be taken into account in seeking a significant reordering of society. It also means participation in practical efforts to effect needed changes in the society, for such efforts shed light both negatively and positively on the probable effectiveness of various methods of seeking to restructure man's corporate existence.

If, for example, Christians reach the conclusion through this assessment that they are in a revolutionary situation, they can faithfully proclaim the Christian gospel only by doing what is necessary to further the revolutionary struggle. In such a situation the defenders of the old order can be "saved" only through fire, through having the bases of their exploitative roles in the society destroyed and with them the values and understandings associated with those roles. Broadly defined, a revolutionary situation is one in which the procedures of decision-making and control by which the society is ordered are concentrated in the hands of persons or groups whose interests are so fundamentally inimical to the well-being of the society as a whole that meaningful gains in the achievement of social justice require the defeat of these interests. Alongside these objective considerations there must also be a subjective readiness on the part of the people victimized by the society to engage in revolutionary struggle, though in this regard proclamation may itself in many cases have to take the form of awakening the consciousness of the people to the necessity and legitimacy of such a struggle.

Even where revolution is called for there are no simple, all-embracing solutions to human social problems. The romantic dream of simply starting anew and by that means escaping all the distortions and dilemmas of the old order is certainly illusory. The building of social institutions is never so easy. Besides, even the most drastic changes in society inevitably preserve many elements, both cultural and structural, from the old order. Consequently, a revolutionary strategy must be quite clear about what specific structures must be destroyed in the revolutionary struggle and what alternative institutional arrangements can be created which will significantly advance the human quest for freedom on the other side of the revolutionary struggle.

If, however, the basic structures in the society together with the interests they presently serve most adequately have valid claims to a continuing place in any future society in spite of the inhuman consequences they presently bring about, then strategies of reform rather than revolutionary struggle probably best describe the concrete form of Christian proclamation. Efforts at social reform, it must be emphasized, are not necessarily free of conflict and violence. Nor are they limited in their operation to the established channels of effecting change provided by the social system itself. They may find it necessary to place great strain on the "normal" functioning of the social system, even inducing relative chaos, in order to bring into being conditions which make possible substantive reforms. In this respect the distinction between revolutionary strategies and strategies of reform is by no means absolute. On the contrary, at certain stages in a given struggle, they may be indistinguishable. The difference is that reform movements finally seek not a replacement and a radical reconstitution of the basic structures of the society, but a recasting of these structures in order to alter the power balance in the society and to take into account legitimate interests which are neglected by the present organization of the society.

In general, it is my judgment that the latter picture most adequately describes the current American situation, even

though the achievement of the necessary reforms will have far-reaching consequences for the society as a whole. In this situation, the *initiative* in Christian proclamation lies with the mobilization and intensification of forces pressing for change, for these are the forces which bear most concretely the promise of the new. Moreover, the burden in this phase of the struggle must be borne by those most violated by the present society, for the creation of a new order of life is most profoundly in keeping with their vital interests. In this context the Christian can give concrete expression to the liberating promise of the gospel only through radical identification with the struggles for change, through taking on the fleshly interests and concerns which give these struggles their driving power. The communal life of the people of God in this phase of the struggle almost invariably takes a sectarian form (E. Troeltsch).<sup>23</sup> That is, the patterns of organization, the shared values and understandings, and the cultic expressions which constitute these people as a people are in conflict with the dominant institutional arrangements of the society. They have an "outsider" character precisely because they give a measure of actuality to a social order which is "not yet," which belongs to the promise of the future. Moreover, within the internal life of such communities, there is a demand for a level of loyalty and purity of commitment which surpasses the minimal requirements normally prevailing in human society. This sectarian form is characteristically an *ad hoc* expression of Christian existence, a new emergent in response to special conditions and needs. It breaks the continuity of the church's institutional and cultic life and challenges the established church to justify its existence as church.

If revolution is neither possible nor appropriate as a concrete goal in a given social system, then Christian proclamation also takes a second form, that of enabling a creative response to the initiative exercised by the forces of change. After the crippling effects of the old order have been exposed through tactics of confrontation and the provocation of conflict, through the heightening of tensions and the polarization of interests, there comes a time in which substantive adjust-

ments on the part of the Establishment to the emergent challenge are both necessary and possible. In this context Christian proclamation involves enabling those who benefit most directly from the old order to perceive the essential legitimacy of the demands put forward by the emergent forces. It involves helping more privileged persons and groups re-examine the character of their own interests in order to discover what is vital and what is not so vital. It involves stimulating and facilitating cooperative efforts by representatives of all interests to invent new ways of ordering the affairs of men which can more nearly actualize the promise of freedom in contemporary society. Even though this form of proclamation cannot share directly in the initiation of new impulses in human history, it is still an essential and creative expression of the gospel. Where it is wholly lacking, the outcome of conflict and confrontation in human society can only be a further fragmentation of man's corporate existence or a life-and-death struggle in which one set of interests finally destroys or represses the other. There are situations in which the only meaningful goal is the defeat of established interests or perhaps the defeat of emerging claimants to a share in the society's power and privilege. More often some sort of accommodation eventually proves to be the most promising pathway to human fulfillment. The initiative for accommodation, for substantive adjustments in the distribution of power and privilege in the society *must* be taken from the side of the Establishment. For the challengers to take that initiative would almost certainly be a "sell-out." Yet where meaningful concessions are offered, radical leaders can respond with integrity and work on a new basis to give concrete actuality to the gospel's promise of freedom, of release to the captives, of good news to the poor.

The ministry of response is a viable possibility within the framework of more established institutions, including the mainline churches. Even if the "church" type (Troeltsch) of religious organization cannot, because of its relation to the larger society, directly link its life to radical movements, it can facilitate a recognition of the creative promise of such

movements. Through such recognition the way can be opened to a new, more liberating order of life.

No actually existing society can in itself perfectly embody the prophetic promise which Jesus adopted as his platform. Yet the gospel does open the way for man to be an actual participant along the way in the struggles which mediate that promise to men. In such participation man can taste in advance the freedom which no social order, indeed, no human work, can offer or guarantee.

#### NOTES

1. *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. by Easton and Guddat (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor, 1967), p. 259.
2. Luke 4:17-19. All biblical citations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.
3. The eleventh of Marx's famous *Theses on Feuerbach* (available in many collections of Marxist writings) underlies this formulation: "Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the problem is to change it." (Trans. mine, T. W. O.)
4. These themes have recently been explored in a most helpful way by William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs, *Black Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968); cf., especially pp. 61, 143-144.
5. Cf. Grier and Price on this point as well, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 113.
6. The expressions of Eldridge Cleaver powerfully represent this view of things; cf. *Soul On Ice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967). At present the Panthers are the best known of such emergent "revolutionary" organizations, but most major urban areas in the United States now have organizations which are following similar lines of development.
7. Cf. Kenneth Keniston's study of radical student leaders, *Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968).
8. C. Wright Mills popularized this concept in a book by the same title, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956). His work requires revision in light of more recent developments, but it remains a forceful and lively formulation of the problem.
9. Studies by Michael Harrington, *The Accidental Century* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965) and Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press,



1967) have almost become contemporary classics in their analysis of this problem. Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society* (New York: Knopf, 1964) can also be appropriately read with these works.

10. Cf. Matt. 15:1-9 and parallels; cf. especially v. 6: "So, for the sake of your traditions you have made void the Word of God."
11. Mark 2:27 and parallels.
12. Cf. especially Matt. 5:21-48.
13. Cf. his discussion of divorce, Mark 10:2-9 and parallels.
14. Mark 12:28-34 and parallels.
15. Cf. Matt. 23 and parallels, especially v. 4: "They [the scribes and Pharisees] bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger."
16. Cf., e.g., Mark II:27-33.
17. On this issue, see Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London: SCM Press, 1958).
18. Franz Fanon has dealt sensitively with this problem, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).
19. Cf. Paul's agonizing reflections on the relation of the Jews to Jesus, Rom. 9-11.
20. On this point, cf. Eph. 1:23 where the church is described as "filling up" Christ's own reality. Indeed, in view of the writer's cosmic interest, expressed in 1:10, it would appear more consistent and also more sound theologically to say that *all things* participate in shaping and fulfilling the reality of Christ, who himself "fills all in all."
21. I Cor. 1:27-29.
22. Harold Cruse and Christopher Lasch are important examples of positive critics of these movements for radical change in contemporary American society. That is, both are sympathetic to these movements and sensitive to their urgency for our times. They criticize them in order that they might be more effective, in order that they might avoid repeating the failures of similar movements in the past. Cf. Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1957).  
See Lasch's articles in the *New York Review of Books*, e.g., "A Special Supplement: The Trouble with Black Power," Feb. 29, 1968, pp. 4-10; also found in *The Agony of the American Left* (New York: Vintage, 1969).
23. For Troeltsch's formulation of the distinction and relation between church and sect see Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, vol. I (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1960), pp. 331-343.

*IV: Domestic Discontents and  
Theological Changes*

# The Black Experience and Black Religion

*Preston N. Williams*

Though understanding the black man is a difficult and elusive task (he is many, not one; he is man, not problem), understand him we must—for on this depends in great measure the safety and survival of our society. Such is the premise of Preston N. Williams, who proceeds to outline three typologies for comprehending the black man's experience: victimization, assimilation-integration, and black awareness or black consciousness. Dr. Williams then discusses the relationship between black religion and these conceptions of the black experience. In his view, it has been and is a meaningful relationship: "Certainly the role it [black religion] has played makes clear the fact that it is a necessary aspect of religious pluralism and an indispensable aid to the black man in his search for both salvation and freedom." Associate Professor of Social Ethics at Boston University School of Theology, Dr. Williams has served as co-chairman of the theology committee of the National Committee of Black Churchmen. His article, from the October 1969 issue of *Theology Today*,\* was one of a series of lectures given in April 1969 at Princeton Theological Seminary as part of the first annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Lectureship, sponsored by the seminary's Association of Black Seminarymen.

ONE OF THE most difficult things to comprehend and understand at this juncture in time is the experience of the black man in America. There are many reasons for this. The obvious reason is the nonmonolithic character of the black man. Americans have at every point attempted to create one image, one picture, one mirror in which all black men might be seen. Often they have succeeded in selling this conception of the black man to a large number of Ameri-

\* P.O. Box 29, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

can citizens, and the black man emerges not simply as Sambo but also as Nat Turner, not simply Aunt Jemima but Julia, not just Louis Armstrong but Dean Dixon and Leontyne Price, not simply Joe Louis but E. Franklin Frazier. The black man is many not one, and any oversimplified approach to discovering who he is will be self-defeating.

The black man is hard to profile also because for most Americans he is defined as a problem. The black man is what gets in our way, blocks our effort at harmony among classes and religion, frustrates our efforts to implement our values of justice, equality, and freedom, unmasks our pretensions and exposes our pride. The very presence of the black man is disruptive, given the status quo. He is by definition a troublemaker, a disturber of America's conscience, a problem.

Consequently all attempts to understand the black man go astray. The beam in our eye renders us incapable of perceiving the mote, i.e., the black man. We define our own guilt, we invent schemes of self-justification, we erect elaborate devices to protect our self-interest and self-esteem. In the process the black man becomes invisible and we are left with only our shadows. The true theme of much of the attempt of America to research, encounter, dialogue, confront the black man is then "me and my shadow." The black man has been rendered invisible and unapproachable by the anxious concern of America with the problems of the black man rather than the black man himself.

The black man is many, not one; he is man, not problem. Understanding him, therefore, is a difficult and elusive task. And yet understand him we must, for the safety and survival of our society is as much dependent upon our ability to understand and know him as it is upon our ability to find proximate answers to the questions raised by technology, population explosion, and nuclear devices.

## I

The task of understanding can be made less complex if we can equip ourselves with a conceptual apparatus for

grasping the salient and characteristic features of the black man's experience and if we can illustrate the usage of that schema by reference to some of the details of the black experience. I would like to offer for your reflection, therefore, three typologies for grasping and explaining the black man's experience, and I would like to illustrate them by reference to black religion or, if you prefer, that type of religion practiced within the black community.

My typologies I shall call victimization, assimilation-integration, and black awareness or black consciousness. I am borrowing the concept of victimization from the eminent sociologist St. Clair Drake, who employs it to define the social ways in which the black man is exploited by social institutions and social forces. The "system of social relations," Drake affirms, "operates in such a way as to deprive them [black men] of a chance to share in the more desirable material and non-material products of a society which is dependent, in part, upon their labor and loyalty. . . . They [black persons] do not have the same degree of access which others have to the attributes needed for rising in the general class system—money, education, 'contacts,' and 'know-how.'" Putting it a bit differently, Drake asserts that "some people [black persons] are used as means to other people's ends—without their consent—and that the social system is so structured that it can be deliberately manipulated to the disadvantage of some [black] groups by the clever, the vicious, and the cynical as well as the powerful."

When these perceptive words of St. Clair Drake are properly understood, they provide a more adequate explanation of the black man in America than is disclosed by such rubrics as cruelty systems, colonialization, or even white racism. The ghettoization of black life in America simply refers to victimization. First the victim of slave traders and slave owners, then the victim of the great betrayal by the Civil War military victors, the black man has been ceaselessly and legally exploited; denied almost every opportunity to acquire the skills needed for success, and (when the possessor of the skills needed for success) denied the opportunity to employ them in a fitting and profitable manner.

The process of victimization has touched the life of every black person in America no matter how successful or fruitful that life has been. Yet we know that while all blacks suffer in this way, not all blacks suffer to the same degree. There were free blacks in the Deep South even during the days of slavery. A few blacks were slave owners, a few more possessed some wealth, more still possessed a measure of equality. The attempted revolt of Denmark Vesey was made possible because such a class existed, and the underground railroad would have been unthinkable were there not Frederick Douglasses or Harriet Tubmans. In differing ways W. E. B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington represent these independent spirits and free men. Make no mistake about it, Dubois was victimized. Harvard University and many similar institutions were not willing to add Dubois to their faculties despite his intellect and impressive scholarly achievements. Nevertheless, one must conclude that Dubois was not fully victimized. He was a victim of an unjust social order, but in many ways—the product often of accident rather than design—Dubois was, due to the same system, able to become a member of the mainstream of American cultural and intellectual life—indeed one of its leaders. He was one of the few men, white or black, who could in 1897 possess a Harvard Ph.D. and shortly thereafter study in Europe. One cannot forget the great loss American intellectual life suffered when it made Dubois a victim of racist attitudes and behavior, but one must also remember that he did enter the free society and he was much more than a marginal participant. Many a university faculty member during the Dubois era has died forgotten and his learning has died with him. Throughout his life Dubois affected the social and intellectual currents of the day, and his legacy of writing and thought is becoming increasingly more significant. Dubois was more than a victim.

So also was Booker T. Washington. On the one hand, Booker T. Washington was a victim. In the opinion of some he was the most complete model of the Uncle Tom that the black man possesses. On the other hand, Washington was neither a victim nor an Uncle Tom. He had been assimilated

almost completely into the life-style of the successful New England businessman of his day. He had learned the value of hard work and shrewd bargaining, and practiced deception in personal relations. He glorified in rigorous personal morality and philanthropy. He was a transplanted New England businessman, a model of his tutor and master, Colonel Armstrong. He was not black but White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

The two-facedness of Booker T. Washington that has perplexed so many black and white interpreters is rooted in this fact—he was a victim at the same time that he was assimilated into the mores of one portion of America's ruling class. Like the poorest and most powerless black Alabamian, he too was victimized and dehumanized by the racist American society. Yet unlike the white crackers around him, he possessed a factory capable of making him the manager and owner of much of black America. His willingness to eschew personal dignity and power in the South made him the most powerful black man in America. Washington, like the wealthy industrialist who supplied capital for Tuskegee, built a factory for the black mind, and like his philanthropic ladies planted the virtue of *noblesse oblige* in the mind of many a black youth. Beyond this Tuskegee has become a symbol for much of white America. It, together with Washington and George Washington Carver, personifies America's myth of the self-made man, of individualism and success. In addition, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, when they had made the desert blossom like a rose, acted continuously to fulfill another important American value: they gave of their wealth to the poor.

## II

Here one needs to be careful and cautious, but one can assert that in general the black middle class can be understood within the framework of the model suggested by the lives of Dubois and Washington. I call this typology assimilation-integration.

Since both these terms are currently in disfavor among a number of significant black persons, a more careful definition is needed. We accept for our purposes the surface meaning of the terms, namely the incorporation of one body of materials into another, in this instance cultural traditions. We reject, however, the notion that either assimilation or integration requires the total destruction of one of the elements to be integrated. One may rightly argue about the proportion of the mixture but there must be a mix. Black and white cultural elements have to be present. In Dubois, for example, it is elitist—the best of Harvard, of Germany, and of Africa. In Washington it is made up of the cultural elements of the *nouveau riche*—America's common culture overlaid with tinsel and gold.

From the beginning until now the black middle class has been similarly constituted. They are the blacks who have, in some important sense, often in a very real sense achieved honor in the integrated society. Even the black professor in the black school in the black belt has had a successful experience in the white world and carries with him traces of cultural understanding that are not all black. In most instances he will take pride in these achievements and even when extolling blackness will incorporate what he has learned from his encounter with the larger cultural tradition.

To some extent assimilation takes place at every point in the experience of cross-cultural contacts. There we use it to designate a preferred and conscious style of life in which the individual's desire is to learn from another cultural group and to use that knowledge to enhance and improve his own cultural tradition.

Perhaps the most comprehensive description of the process of assimilation has been provided by Professor Milton M. Gordon in his volume *Assimilation in American Life*. There he identifies seven stages or types of assimilation.

1. Cultural or behavioral assimilation—the change of cultural patterns to those of the host society.
2. Structural assimilation—the large-scale entrance into



cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society on a primary group level.

3. Marital assimilation—large-scale intermarriage.
4. Identificational assimilation—the development of a sense of peoplehood based exclusively on the host society model.
5. Attitude receptional assimilation—the absence of prejudice.
6. Behavior receptional assimilation—the absence of discrimination.
7. Civic assimilation—the absence of value and power conflict.

*Assimilation* as we have used the term includes notions of change of cultural attitudes—cultural assimilation and the desire for the elimination of prejudice, discrimination, and value and power conflicts. Gordon calls these respectively attitude receptional, behavior receptional, and civil assimilation.

We have added the term *integration* to refer to what Gordon calls structural assimilation, that is, large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society on a primary group level. We do not, however, include either marital or identificational assimilation in our conception of assimilation-integration.

Let us summarize. We are here asserting that assimilation-integration is a suitable typology for understanding much of the black experience in America and that it is especially fitted to explain black middle-class life. These persons sought cultural patterns similar to that of the host society; they sought also the elimination of prejudice, discrimination, and value and power conflicts. To a lesser extent this group desired large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of this host society on a primary-groups level. They did not possess any concern for large-scale intermarriage, nor did they desire to pass over completely into the white world. A black people was to exist, but in complete harmony and rapport with others and as participants alongside others in one set of social institutions.

## III

My third typology for the description of the black experience is black awareness or black consciousness. The type is not simply contemporary. It is obvious to me that black awareness or black consciousness is an attitude, a disposition of mind and heart, of soul, if you will, possessed by the black man from the very beginning of his experience in America. His high visibility set him apart. It made possible his categorization as a slave rather than as a free man or an indentured servant. It lent validity to every effort to label him as different, inferior, or quasi-human. Whether we like it or not, black always implied some form of separation, a difference from all other Americans that could not be eradicated except by the most unacceptable of remedies—complete intermarriage or complete deportation.

Afro-American can imply integration-assimilation. It suggests Irish-American or German-American together with the process of assimilation used by those groups in accommodating themselves to American society. Black implied separateness, it pointed to the unassimilative nature of the black man in America. The only other physical or social characteristic that was similarly so unambiguous was hair.

Black awareness or black consciousness is not intended to imply full or complete separation, just as assimilation-integration does not imply complete amalgamation. Black consciousness or black awareness might cause one to seek to rid himself of his blackness. It might cause one to desire to remove the "color line" which separated the black man from the rest of society just as it might cause one to make the "color line" a wall. Moreover, we must remember that even the wall when erected will be a porous wall—something analogous to the wall of separation between church and state. What is unique about this type is not the response that one makes to one's blackness but, rather, knowledge of one's blackness as something peculiar and different and as

something that demands a special act of acceptance or rejection.

The diversity of response to one's blackness can be seen when one looks into the writing of any so-called or real prophet of separation. Elijah Muhammad, for example, would like to build a separate black nation within America, but despite the separation the new nation would engage in some sort of regular communication with the nonblack world.

Marcus Garvey wanted the black man to repossess Africa; yet one of the reasons for this policy of repossession was the desire to have the black man establish firmly the full equality of his person and his culture. Presumably when this was accomplished this fully equal black man would have relationships with others just like those existing among white and yellow people or among Arabs and Indians. To be sure, these relationships should not be considered ideal but, on the other hand, separation does not properly describe the relationship.

Albert Cleage also suggests the necessity of a black nation, but his people will be scattered throughout white society and will have as their faith a religion whose ancestry and God is associated with universalism and neighborliness among mankind.

Those who are aware of their blackness do not then respond in only one way. Some tend toward acceptance of victimization. Some tend toward assimilation and integration in the host society. What is unique about this group is their recognition of what Milton M. Gordon calls structural pluralism, or the separation of ethnic groups in such a way as to make it possible or necessary for them to maintain their own communal identity and subculture. In addition, if Gordon is correct, primary-group contacts will be held to a minimum even though secondary contacts or impersonal contacts may abound.<sup>1</sup>

If this notion of expanding secondary, impersonal relation-

<sup>1</sup> Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

ships among group and individuals while restricting primary relationships to one's own group and one's own kind of people seems strange or repellent, let me remind you that this, according to Milton Gordon, is the way American society operates. One might conclude, therefore, that the black separatist, so-called, is doing in a flamboyant way what the rest of society does quietly and without much thought. Black separatism, so-called, is as American as Coca-Cola.

It is apparent that in actual existence aspects of these three types of black experience will be found in the life of every black man. Accordingly we should seek no rigid conformity to a pattern. All black men are to some degree victims, are to some extent participants in a process of assimilation-integration, and to some measure are cognizant of the fact that they are black. Their perception of life will be determined, however, by one of these perspectives more than by the other two. Under the three, I think, we can comprehend every aspect of the black experience in America.

#### IV

What I would like to do now is to relate black religion to these conceptions of the black experience. By black religion I shall mean any religious teaching embraced by a significant number of black persons. The only uniqueness I shall predict of black religion is that it is held and practiced by black persons. Black religion, I want to demonstrate, is peculiarly fitted to aid the black man to discover meaning in life and to cope with life's many problems and frustrations. Once again we must sketch lightly and, we hope, deftly with a quick stroke.

If religion is to help one who has been systematically victimized to find meaning in life, it must do three things at least. It must enable the person to establish a sense of personhood, to endure the sufferings of life and to make sense of them and, finally, to find a foundation upon which to place a belief in righteousness and justice.

It is my contention that black religion has met all three of

these requirements. In many and sundry ways through religion the black slave and the black slave in the ghetto have come to know that they are not chattel, beings less than human, or the most inferior of human creatures. Religion has taught them that they are children of God and equal to all other men. One spiritual succinctly catches up all these concerns:

I got shoes  
 You got shoes  
 All God's children got shoes.  
 When we get to Heaven  
 We're going to put on our shoes  
 An' shout all over God's Heaven.  
 Heaven! Heaven!  
 But everybody talking 'bout Heaven  
 Ain't going there.

Here one sees the three motifs clearly stated. Slaves and masters are both God's children; amid the suffering of slavery solace is provided by knowledge of one's possession of a few of life's amenities—shoes—and the future possession of a heaven where all men shall be free to shout and dance, to be equal—but also a heaven built, not upon inequality and slavery, but upon justice and righteousness.

... everybody talking 'bout Heaven  
 Ain't going there.

The master may not enjoy heaven; perhaps also some others, who like the master are responsible for evil and injustice, will not enjoy it either.

If we look at the faith of the Black Muslim, we shall find a similar meaning provided to the victims of this world's evil. The personhood of the black man is affirmed by asserting that the black is the original man and that the white man is a creature grafted out from the black man but in such fashion as to graft out his humanity. The sufferings of life are explained by declaring that Allah has given the white devils six thousand years to rule; justice as the cornerstone of creation is confirmed by teaching that Allah will over-

turn this wicked rule and re-establish the control of the black man.

Let us permit one form of Christian interpretation and one form of non-Christian teaching to stand for the whole and draw quickly our conclusion: namely, that black religion has throughout its history sought to make the victimized black man capable of carrying his burden. At its best it faced life realistically, enabled men to seek to overcome their handicaps, and positively related men to ultimate truth, the true and living God. At its worst it was an opiate putting men to sleep and distorting and falsifying reality.

The black man's religion has also acted to undergird his desire to become a full member of American society. Mass religion, wherever it has been successful, has provided in part a solace to the victims of society's ills.

I'm a rolling, I'm a rolling, I'm a rolling thro'  
an unfriendly world,  
I'm a rolling, I'm a rolling, I'm a rolling thro'  
an unfriendly world.  
O brothers, won't you help me,  
O brothers, won't you help me to pray?  
O sisters, won't you help me,  
O sisters, won't you help me to pray?  
O preachers, won't you help me,  
O preachers, won't you help me to fight?  
O preachers, won't you  
Won't you help me in the service of the Lord?

Brothers, sisters, preachers—all victimized not only by an unfriendly but also a racist world—found the balm in Gilead in the service of the Lord. The black denominations and black religionists in predominantly white churches have not only accomplished this, but they at their best have also aided significantly the process of assimilation-integration.

We should not forget, despite the obscuring features of the myths, that Baptist and Methodist labels point to the ability of Christianity to transcend color. Negro spirituals may be representations of African culture despite the evident Christian content of many of their lyrics, but when one

affirms that Baptist and Methodist is the genuine religion of the black man, then one is saying that the Judeo-Christian tradition is or can be the genuine religion of the black man. Assimilation and integration in some form has taken place, and one is very close to affirming that it is not only inevitable but also desirable.

We can go a bit further in suggesting that the Judeo-Christian tradition can become or is already genuine black religion. We need but recall that when Richard Allen founded the African Methodist Church, his coworker Absalom Jones founded an Episcopal church. Moreover, Bishop Payne of the African Methodist Church was educated at the Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary and was a Presbyterian prior to becoming an African Methodist and the founder of the Wilberforce University and Payne Theological Seminary.

When we ask why these men left white churches and established black churches, the answer that seems to be given by all is the desire of the white church to keep the black man in his place. The new churches did not feel an imperative need to develop a black theology, a black ethic, a black religion. The new churches did not, therefore, produce completely new liturgies, or policies, or theologies. What was carried into the new churches was modified, of course, by time and circumstance, but what was provided immediately for the black man was the opportunity to determine one's own destiny, to occupy positions of leadership, to acquire the skills necessary to perform complex and difficult administrative tasks, and to allocate and use power.

The seriousness of the black man's approach to this task cannot be denied. Not only the management of congregations and the building of churches, but also the establishment of schools and colleges, of publishing houses and other auxiliary enterprises, underscore the black man's desire to demonstrate by performance in the real world his ability to master all the skills necessary for success.

Had the system of victimization been less rigorous, the black man's success would have been greater. Had the black

man been less concerned with assimilation and integration, he might have attempted to undertake a more rigorous attack upon the evils of the system and to spend less time building a separate world in which he could develop both the dignity and pride of manhood and the middle-class value and skills prevalent in the larger society.

It is not our desire or intent, however, to deal exhaustively with the past. What is important is our ability to see that religion, indeed what is considered authentic black religion, played an important role in the black man's desire for assimilation and integration.

Before one damns this whole contribution as misbegotten, let me remind you that America has always consisted of two societies; one free and one slave, one white and one black. During the pre-Civil War days, to seek assimilation and integration was to pursue the most radical type of social change.

When during the post-Civil War period Jim Crow was born, the black church was already many years old, and its pattern of development was already set. In addition, the evolving patterns of Jim Crow, lynch law, and blatant racism left the free black man no alternative other than assimilation-integration and few means except religion that could serve the cause of freedom and education.

That organized religion choose the path of assimilation-integration was almost a foregone conclusion, the result of a divine decree. Gibson Winter is correct then in affirming that the dynamic of the black community is similar to that of other ethnic communities and that the dynamic of black religion is similar to that of the black community. The black man, especially the middle-class black man, has sought identification with his community, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, he has sought to surrender this black identity in order to become fully American. This ambivalence of the black man has been mirrored in his religious life. Nonetheless, it is far from true to suggest, as did Gibson Winter, that "folk religiousness" was rejected by the black middle-class church, or that the black middle class was insulated



from the rest of the black community. As a consequence formality of worship, organizational style, and white-collar motifs were never entrenched in the churches of the "black bourgeoisie," and many a middle-class Negro rejected and rejects religious participation entirely because of its exclusive Negro identity.<sup>2</sup> Here one finds himself in agreement with author and college chaplain Joseph Washington; had the middle-class black church become the model of formality of worship, organizational style, and white-collar motifs, what Washington called "Black Religion" would have been non-existent and his call to complete amalgamation would be totally incomprehensible.

What we must realize is that the black middle-class church has always been supportive of assimilation-integration but that it has also always sought to preserve what it considered to be the highest and best of black culture. This was due in part to the fact that middle-class churches were seldom only middle class. They included janitors as well as doctors, maids as well as schoolteachers, rural as well as urban types. The worship and liturgy was designed therefore to speak to past, present, and future. Folk-religious patterns remained strong because the common experience of the black man was rooted in the lessons taught by the dark past and not the hope that might be present in some distant future.

God of our weary years  
 God of our silent tears  
 Thou who has brought us thus far on our way;  
 Thou who hast by Thy might  
 Let us into the light  
 Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

The children of victimization could not forget their past even when the burdens were lightened and some measure of equality existed. Yet the cultural and religious patterns of black religion were being accommodated to the general cul-

<sup>2</sup> Gibson Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961).

tural models, an end was being sought to prejudice, discrimination, and value and power conflicts. But only in a limited way was entrance sought in primary groups and intermarriage was seldom advocated. More importantly, the church itself, as Joseph Washington observes, stood as a formidable barrier to identificational assimilation.

Let me try to illustrate my point by reference to the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was in our time the foremost proponent of integration, and his philosophy is a blend of black and white tradition. All that he did reflects assimilation and integration. Yet it has been Martin Luther King and the men around him, James Lawson, Ralph Abernathy, Jessie Jackson, and James Bevel, who have done most, perhaps, to make us alive to the black church and its heritage of song, prayer meetings, preaching, and fellowship.

Black consciousness or black awareness has also received support and legitimation from the black church. Indeed one can say that the original black church knew itself only as a black church practicing black religion. I refer now, of course, to the invisible church, the blacks who caught religion as it escaped from the doors and windows of the white church and who had to hide in the fields and practice their religion in fear of bodily harm from their white overseers and masters. Black consciousness or black awareness is as old as black religion itself, and it will disappear only when the color line itself disappears.

To tell the story of black consciousness is, in fact, simply to tell the story of the black man in America. Here, however, we have reference to those whose keen sense of their racial identity lead them to emphasize the need for separation. The members of the invisible church were forcibly separated from their white brethren; these persons separate themselves by desire.

I want here only to make reference to several religious figures in order to demonstrate the fact that black consciousness or awareness has existed within the mainstream of black religion and among the black masses.

My first reference is to Bishop Henry McNeal Turner,

1834-1915, a bishop of the A.M.E. Church and an advocate of black nationalism. For Turner, Africa was the black man's true home and in 1877 he and a group of Charleston A.M.E. ministers formed the South Carolina Liberian Exodus. In the following year (1878), this group sent a group of black emigrants to Africa aboard the ship *Azor*. Since Turner was not elected bishop until 1880, it seems fair to conclude that despite opposition by many to his views, his election as bishop constituted at least a limited endorsement of his colonization views.

Turner, like the blacks today, had been originally a supporter of integration but in the face of white violence, lynchings, convict labor systems, and Jim Crowism he was led to conclude that the black man had only the alternatives of Africa or extermination. He demanded that the Negro "Respect Black!" and to stress the point he asserted, "God is a Negro: Even the heathen in Africa believe that they are created in God's image. But American Africans believe they resemble the devil, and hence the contempt they have for themselves and each other!"

In 1891, 1893, and 1898 Turner visited Africa, establishing Christian missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and South Africa. While I have not yet had the time to document the matter, I believe that it was the work of Turner, who did not die until 1915, which prepared the way for Marcus Garvey.

Garvey was, of course, the best-known preacher of blackness. Here we care only to assert that while he affirmed that God was of no color, black men should see him as black just as white conceived of him as white and yellow persons saw him as yellow. To provide his movement with religious legitimization he founded an African Orthodox Church which was presided over by a former Episcopal priest who was consecrated bishop by a Greek Orthodox bishop.

What we need to note here is that both Turner and Garvey accepted the Christian religion as the religion of the black man. To be sure, they made modifications in their interpretations of the faith but neither felt that a new faith had to be invented or that only the religions of Africa could satisfy

the religious longings and the aspirations of the black man. They denied then the assertion of the Black Muslims that Christianity was the white man's religion, although like Albert Cleage they sought to make the symbols of the faith reflect the peculiar concerns of the black man and provide a positive legitimization of his skin color.

We need not, I think, elaborate the views of the Black Jews or the Black Muslims. Suffice it to say that they provide the black man with an alternative to the Christian faith. In addition, they imply that religions that have their origin in places other than the fatherland, Africa, have been put forth by advocates of black consciousness as adequate vehicles for the spiritual expression of the black man's soul. Have we not here an admission that true religion must possess a universal dimension?

Black religion has been supportive of black awareness or black consciousness in yet another way. It has provided religious sanctions for secular expressions of black consciousness. In July of 1966, for example, the Committee of National Negro Churchmen issued their statement on Black Power and many of these churchmen together with Nathan Wright sponsored the First National Black Power Conference. These actions were but the beginning of a series of actions that continue until today and embrace among other activities the creation of Black Caucuses and the black seminarian student organizations.

Much more can be and needs to be said. Perhaps I have said enough to indicate that black religion has spoken a meaningful word to the black experience. Certainly the role it has played makes clear the fact that it is a necessary aspect of religious pluralism and an indispensable aid to the black man in his search for both salvation and freedom.

# Counterculture and Academic Reform

*Myron B. Bloy, Jr.*

In large part sympathetic to the counterculture of the young, Myron B. Bloy, Jr., is concerned to bridge the gap between the new youth consciousness and the tradition-bound ways of thinking that characterize academia. As a means of facilitating this task Bloy favors abandonment of both technological and mystical realism—"the dominant forms of epistemology in the West"—in favor of Paul Tillich's "historical realism," with its focus on concrete existence. Foil for Bloy is fellow theologian Michael Novak, whom he accuses of beating a retreat and settling for "some hoary pieties" in the area of educational reform. (For Novak's reply, see the subsequent essay.) Formerly the Episcopal chaplain at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Bloy since 1966 has been Executive Director of the Church Society for College Work, with headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts; in the latter post he has been engaged primarily in research and development in the field of religion and higher education. He is the author of *The Crisis of Cultural Change* and has contributed chapters to a number of other books. His essay, which was first published in the April 27, 1970 issue of *Christianity and Crisis*,\* is based on an address delivered to the annual meeting of the College Theology Society.

THE CONFLICT between the academic high culture and the counterculture of the young is deeper and more abiding than many of us, including myself, had suspected. Tenured department heads and SDS leaders used to share an assumption that, however great their ostensible differences, if they dug deep enough they would eventually come

\* 537 West 121 St., New York, N.Y. 10027. Reprinted from the April 27, 1970, issue of CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS, Copyright © 1970 by Christianity and Crisis, Inc.

to the common ground on which they could join to build the new academic Jerusalem. Even if liberalism—no matter how left-leaning—and radicalism could hardly be called synonymous, they *did*, we argued, share an aversion to the war, racism, and exploitation, and a contempt for the philistine values of the bourgeoisie.

Those halcyon days of easy hope are over now. Most student counterculturalists, concluding apparently that higher education is irreformable, have come to see the university as little more than a base for political forays and cultural experimentation. David Reisman, a peripatetic teacher, sees in classrooms everywhere an escalation of despair and a decline of curiosity. On the other hand, many faculty, unable to keep their own passion for academic change alive without their student allies and goads, sink quietly back into their old routines, riding out the storm. Thus, academic reform languishes.

The Church Society for College Work recently gained some first-hand knowledge of this difficulty of finding common ground for the academic and countercultures. We devised a project in which a team of articulate students—political and cultural radicals and blacks—would help seminars of senior faculty and administrators understand counterculture values and devise more adequate educational responses to them. Although the project was planned with great care and the commitment of all the participants to the series of weekly six-hour seminars was high, not much learning took place.

Our student faculty, despite their articulateness and manifest leadership abilities among their peers, had little pedagogical imagination; they tended to lay on the same heavy, authoritative rap that they had experienced in the classroom. For their part, the faculty and administrators listened to their student teachers with polite—but, in the end, patronizing—care, apparently willing to mollify the counterculture enough to preserve the basic assumptions of the educational establishment but unwilling, even hypothetically, to entertain seriously the radical import of these new values. Our experience corroborates Michael Novak's recent descrip-

tion of the state of educational reform today ("Education for What?", in the February 16, 1970 issue of *Christianity and Crisis*):

All around the country, those involved in experimental education report similar findings: the quality of work goes down; lassitude rises; petty bickering dominates school politics; both student and faculty morale sags; displays of hysteria, rage and incredibly sloppy reasoning multiply; and self-criticism sinks in the marsh of moral complacency.

### *The Gap between Learning and Acting*

Although a shrewder methodology might have improved the possibilities of communication between students and faculty in the projects, I believe the fundamental logjam was caused by an inability to uncover the profound epistemological issue implicit in the conflict between the academic and countercultures. In the first place, this issue was obscured by the blatant differences in life-style—in rhetoric, clothes, mores, etc.—between the representatives of the two cultures. The establishment representatives seemed repressed, secretive, defensive and, in a word, "uptight" to the radical students, who seemed to the faculty to be frighteningly anti-intellectual, flamboyant, undisciplined and "irresponsible."

But the issue was obscured even more by the tacit agreement of all concerned that the epistemological assumption of the academic high culture—namely, that learning and acting, objectivity and passionate commitment could and should be separated in space and time—is an eternal given. The revolutionary challenge of the counterculture to higher education per se can never achieve its proper joining until that epistemological assumption is demythologized for both cultures.

The difficulty of breaking through this impasse from the side of the academic high culture—the intellectual turf on which I most naturally stand—can be seen clearly in the

retreat that Michael Novak has recently beat. A year ago, in *A Theology for Radical Politics*<sup>1</sup> (pp. 86-88), he seemed to be striking for pay dirt. He wrote then:

It is important to make clear that the protest of the reformers is not merely a protest of activists against theoreticians. The student protestants are saying the old *doctrines* are wrong, the theories are inadequate, the professors are blind to too many realities of life. The reformation is theoretical as well as practical. We have to revise our *conception* of knowledge and the role of science, our *view* of ourselves and of our world. The issues involved, in fact, sound like metaphysical or theological issues.

Novak went on to argue that their "conception of knowledge" had a bias toward the present, which had yet to discover a language adequate to its articulation.

They do not *wish* to be anti-intellectual, but the one available intellectual language is abhorrent to them. Moreover, it is impossible for them to return to the classics, the great books or the humanists—the recovery of a tradition that has now lapsed would turn them into historians, whereas it is the present and the future they most want to absorb and to comprehend. Had they the language, one feels, many of them would like to articulate clearly what is happening now, and thus produce new classics expressing our own cultural era.

Another aspect of their bias was, he observed, toward the joining of reflection and action. He described this bias: "The road to personal liberation is not private or through meditation, but political. Awareness grows through conscious, reflective, accurate action. The separation between thought and action, which present university life enforces, seems to the students illegitimate...." *✱*

The role of teachers in relation to this new conception was suggested by Novak: "The radical students need help. Specifically, they need fresh theories, new intellectual tools, openness to breakthroughs and readiness for originality. In many cases, all they need is someone to help them to articu-

<sup>1</sup> New York: Herder & Herder, 1969.

NOW - present - future emphasis was original. Still then  
 and all to 1962-3 1960-65. (But it was a style nostalgia) And in 1965 the return  
 to the past is an ancient problem is on a scale.



late what they have already experienced and cannot quite say."

All in all, Novak's analysis last year of the counterculture's challenge to the academic culture and his program for response were clearly on the right track, but this year he has become another faculty dropout. Now he says that "the youth culture and higher education are at almost diametrical cross-purposes." "To be sure," he adds in a small caveat,

there are still good schools in which traditions are so strong and standards so solid that students have been able to sound a creative note, voicing insights that have not been voiced. But it would be rash to leap to the conclusion that "the youth culture" or "the counter-culture" truly cares about educational reform, about the intellectual life, about critical habits of mind. In carefully modulated contexts, *some* of their rage may be "constructively" channeled. But what the youth culture is up to, really up to, is not educational reform.<sup>2</sup>

### *Hoary Pieties and Youth's Prophetic Style*

Novak's idea of educational reform, which was formerly daring and open-ended, has now been confined to some hoary pieties; here is how in the recent *Christianity and Crisis* article he now asks and answers the question of the university's purpose:

What is the university *qua* university? To my way of thinking it is an end and not a means, an institutional home for those who delight in fidelity to their native drive to understand; a home for those who, through giving rein to that drive, have tested the nothingness beneath all human forms, concepts, symbols; and who through that drive debunk all present dominations and powers, and invent new possibilities for the future. . . . It is a home and preparatory ground, but it is not a base of operations for agents of social change. It is a home for those who otherwise have no home in any concrete social or political situation.

<sup>2</sup> "Do Students Want Education?" *Commonweal*, March 13, 1970.

The same man who a year ago was pleading for a new conception of knowledge based on the youth culture's sensitivity for the present moment and on their commitment to the unity of thought and action has now reverted to the patronizing posture of the traditional academic culture, falling back on ontological assertions about "the university *qua* university." What happened?

Although I can only infer from a number of similar metamorphoses of former allies of the counterculture, I suspect that Novak may be among those who, while using the language of intellectual revolution, were *really* expecting a modest reformation and then felt betrayed when it turned out that what the counterculture is about really *is* revolution. When that realization sinks in, years of socialization in the academic tradition are often more determinative of imagination and loyalty than uncertain and uncomfortable visions of brave new educational worlds.

As I indicated above, the revolutionary thrust of the counterculture is perceived largely at the stylistic level. Notice Novak's rhetoric: insights are to be "voiced" rather than demonstrated, only "carefully modulated" inputs can be tolerated, and, most importantly, the university is repeatedly described as a "home," moreover a home for those who, unlike the foxes with their holes and the birds with their nests, have no "concrete social or political situation" on which to lay their heads. The outrageous young, refusing to allow their life-style to be carefully modulated by the mores of scholarly society, their voices forever spilling over into action, are fouling the only home left in this philistine world for those who give themselves to pure understanding.

But if the counterculture has moral insight into our society, as Novak was previously ready to grant, then his implicit complaint about its manners, its harsh judgments, its rage, is misplaced. One recalls Jesus' little lecture to an audience that had apparently found John the Baptist's manners too uncouth for their taste. Jesus said to them, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine

clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you. . . ." Jesus is, of course, reminding his audience that prophets have never been known for their couthness—that, in fact, the truth they bear is partially authenticated by the very *uncouthness* of its bearers.

Although I don't want to make too much of this aspect of the academician's retreat from the youth culture, I have no doubt that academic culture has become overdicate, a kind of glass menagerie of arcane and brittle customs that threatens to break under the jostling of the prophetic style of the young. But, obviously I think, the conflict in manners between the academic and youth cultures is really an expression of fundamentally differing spiritual assumptions. A recent film review in a student newspaper opened with this paragraph:

In case you haven't heard, there's a revolution going on in this country. It's not just a "generation gap," and it's not just a "stage" that the kiddies are going through. Just as the Renaissance brought Europe out of an intellectual vacuum, and the Industrial Revolution brought the West out of economic stagnation, the youth revolution is trying to carry America out of a spiritual abyss.

Although the writer's historical analogies could use some serious qualification, few close observers of the youth scene can doubt his assessment of the extent ("revolutionary") and character ("spiritual") of the change that the young struggle to accomplish in themselves and in the world, especially the world of higher education. But neither the youth culture nor the academic culture has joined the issue on ground that brings together both the spiritual assumptions and the phenomenological realities of the two cultures. The ground is usually either so cosmic and spiritualized that the debate lacks real concretion, or is so simplistically political that the spiritual roots of the conflict are never exposed.

When Novak said that a revised "conception of knowledge" or "a new model of intelligence" must be the basis of educational reform, he laid bare the ground on which the issue

can most profitably be joined. The pity is that he did not press substantially ahead on that ground when he had the heart for it.

### *Tillich's Vision of "the Really Real"*

Paul Tillich's early (1929) essay on "Realism and Faith" in *The Protestant Era*<sup>3</sup> (pp. 68-78) is an extremely useful tool for describing our epistemological impasse and for suggesting a possible future basis for higher education. He builds his analysis on this assumption:

Knowing is a union between the knower and the known. The cognitive will is the will of a separated life to unite itself with other life. *Theoria* is not detached observation, although different degrees of separation and detachment are a necessary element in knowledge; but *theoria* is union with the really real, with that level of a thing in which the "power of being" is situated.

The key question then concerns the operative vision of reality that determines where and how the "really real" is expected to be discovered. Tillich describes the three major Western realisms and their consequent epistemologies; the first two have their roots in Greek thinking.

It is characteristic of Greek thought that from the beginning it sought the power of a thing, the "really real" of it, in that element which can be grasped by the "logos," the word, the speech, the notion. The "rational" (that which is susceptible to the logos) is the really real. The power of a thing is to be discovered in that which can be grasped by word and concept.

Tillich then shows how this "unity of rationality and the power of being may be interpreted in different ways":

Since the power of being is discovered by thought, the thinking subject may become, intentionally or unintentionally, the bearer of all power. . . . From the critical and ethical schools

<sup>3</sup> Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

of Greek philosophy this attitude is transmitted through late nominalism to modern technical science and the technocratic worldview. One concedes to things only so much power as they should have in order to be useful. Reason becomes the means of controlling the world. The really real (*ousia*) of things is their calculable element, that which is determined by natural laws.

He called this attitude "technological realism" and saw positivism as its most recent philosophical form. He then went on to describe another way that

reason as the way of grasping the power of things may be understood. . . . The power of being within reality may be preserved also in a rationalized and spiritualized form. In this case the true being, discovered by the logos, becomes a matter of contemplation and union. . . . Mere vital existence, the control and transformation of reality, practice generally and even physical and mathematical knowledge are transcended, and the eternal essences and their unity and ground are sought.

This approach, which was dominant in the high Middle Ages, he refers to as "mystical realism." It is still with us, however.

Theories of intuitive knowledge, classicist and romantic revivals of ancient medieval forms of thought, phenomenology, the philosophy of life (aesthetic or vitalistic), the "theory of Gestalt," some types of the psychology of the "unconscious"—all these seek for the inner power of things beyond (or below) the level at which they are calculable and dominable.

The problem with both technological and mystical realism—the dominant forms of epistemology in the West—is that neither looks to concrete existence, the here and now, to seek the power of reality, but rather "They abstract from it—technological realism for the sake of means and ends, mystical realism for the sake of essence and intuition." Only "historical realism" looks for the really real "in time and space, in our historical existence, in that sphere from which all Greeks had taken flight." Tillich summarizes this third per-

spective, which is rooted in the prophetic-Christian interpretation of history, in these terms:

For historical realism the really real appears in the structures created by the historical process. History cannot be understood in terms of technological realism. It cannot become an object of calculation and control like some levels of natural objects. History, on the other hand, cannot be grasped in a mystical contemplation of its essence. It is open to interpretation only through active participation. We can grasp the power of historical being only if we are grasped by it in our own historical existence. Detached observation of historical events and registration of assumed historical laws removes us from the possibility of approaching history.

Historical realism transcends technological, as well as mystical, realism. Its decisive characteristic is consciousness of the present situation, of the "here and now." It sees the power of being, in the depth of "our historical situation." It is contemporaneous, and in this it differs from the technological, as well as the mystical, idea of reality.

The importance of historical realism for cognition is that it "makes participation in the whole of human existence a condition of true knowledge, [and] this applies to the personal, as well as the social, reality of man in history." Tillich argues:

Nobody is able to penetrate into the deeper levels of a historical situation without penetrating into the deeper levels of his personality. Knowing the really real of our historical existence presupposes the knowledge of the really real in ourselves. But knowing one's self on this level is transforming one's self. Detached observation of one's self is here impossible. And knowing our historical situation on this level transforms our historical situation. Detached observation of our historical situation is here impossible. He who knows in terms of historical realism is he who is creative in himself and in history.

His conclusion is that "The ideal of knowledge in historical realism is the union of scientific objectivity with passionate self-interpretation and self-transformation . . . with a passionate understanding and transformation of the historical situation."

*Self-Transcending Realism*

Through this analysis, Tillich finally arrives at his notion of "self-transcending realism," which is, he says, "the religious depth of historical realism," a depth without which historical realism remains comparatively unrealistic. Using a beautiful image, Tillich explains himself:

Self-transcending realism is based on the consciousness of the "here and now." The ultimate power of being, the ground of reality, appears in a special moment, in a concrete situation, revealing the infinite depth and the eternal significance of the present. But this is possible only in terms of paradox, i.e., by faith, for in itself, the present is neither infinite nor eternal. The more it is seen in the light of the ultimate power, the more it appears as questionable and void of lasting significance. So the power of a thing is, at the same time, affirmed and negated when it becomes transparent for the ground of its power, the ultimately real. It is as in a thunderstorm at night, when the lightning throws a blinding clarity over all things, leaving them in complete darkness the next moment. When reality is seen in this way with the eye of self-transcending realism, it has become something new. Its ground has become visible in an "ecstatic" experience, called "faith."

This, then, is Tillich's argument in rough outline, and I expect it is already apparent how useful it can be for uncovering and breaking through the epistemological impasse between the academic and countercultures.

In fact, Tillich exposes the dominant epistemological tradition of higher education and, in the process, reveals the meager parochialism of the "two-culture" analysis and debate. The fact is that, although professional and technical institutions may function primarily on the assumptions of technological realism and liberal arts colleges on those of mystical realism (according to their catalogs, at least), these differences are insignificant compared to their common flight from the here and now as the place where the really real is discovered.

Surely when Novak exalts the university as "a home for those who otherwise have no home in any concrete social or political situation," he is solidly grounded in one or the other aspect of the Greek epistemology. And if the business of those in this home is to taste "the nothingness beneath all human forms, concepts [and] symbols" then this retreat from the contemporary is also a safe bastion from which to undermine the possibility that history can ever be the bearer of the power of being.

Tillich has also exposed the irony in Novak's assertion that "there is no use making universities into baby-sitting establishments for the youth culture." While the young are willing to engage the risky present in order to uncover meaning, the epistemological ground of the traditional academic culture makes the university a baby-sitting establishment for those who are afraid to run the risk of self-transformation that engagement of the here and now necessarily entails. Anyone who has not been totally socialized by the academic high culture knows that the nose-tilted negativity of the academic style is usually less prophetic engagement than spiritual cop-out.

### *Passionate Transformations*

If Tillich has implicitly demythologized the academic culture, exposing its a priori commitments so that it becomes merely ethnocentric to speak of the university *qua* university, he has also provided in his development of historical realism a theoretical instrument for understanding the educational implications of the counterculture. The counterculture young already instinctively realize that the gaining of any knowledge worth the name must involve "passionate self-interpretation and self-transformation and passionate understanding and transformation of the historical situation." If they do not yet fully accept the fact that "scientific objectivity" is the other necessary ingredient of historical realism's epistemological mix, then it is largely because too many of their



academic mentors and the system itself have told them that higher education is *only* interested in objectivity, that severe repression of *any* passionate self or social transformation is the price of knowledge.

As the early Novak suggested, the counterculture young need the help of experienced intellectual hands to work out their implicit epistemology and the educational shapes it might take, but these hands should recognize that modest reforms in "carefully modulated contexts" cannot contain or manifest this new consciousness, that the only way through this particular eye of the needle is a revolutionary way. New wine needs new wineskins.

When we accept historical realism as a valid and useful ideal for knowledge today, we implicitly challenge such sacred academic traditions as the architecturally and psychically detached campus (the "home" away from history), that only those who have run the full gauntlet of higher education are capable of helping others press reality for its meaning, that man's nature is dualistic with only the rational aspect as capable of cognition, that learning is a basically individualistic and competitive enterprise in which dominance and control are the appropriate attitudes, or that time is a rationalistic rather than a human reality.

I haven't the foggiest notion of what counterculture education would look like. I am sure, however, that any academician who is willing to accept Tillich's assumption that the really real is discovered only through entering deeply into the contemporary moment—through abandoning oneself to an open-ended odyssey of personal and historical transformation—will find himself on the other side of the current impasse. There he will share with the counterculture young their struggle to find the appropriate educational theories, shapes and styles for their new consciousness. For those academicians who stand in the tradition of Genesis I and John I, this choice must be at least a serious possibility.

# The Volatile Counterculture

Michael Novak

Taking up the challenge laid down by Myron B. Bloy, Jr., in the foregoing essay, Michael Novak offers a formidable criticism of the youth counterculture, contending that it constitutes a system as corrupt and limited as the one it presumes to revolutionize. He also strongly defends the tradition of critical inquiry for its own sake: "Unless the university has somewhere among its various novelties and institutes for relevance a cadre of men committed to the demands of critical intelligence, little in the university will be of enduring relevance. Nothing is as irrelevant as the preceding generation's relevance." Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the State University of New York at Old Westbury, Novak is the author of such books as *The Experience of Nothingness*, *A Theology for Radical Politics*, *Belief and Unbelief*, and the novel *Naked I Leave*. His essay is from the May 25, 1970 issue of *Christianity and Crisis*.\*

PRESIDENT NIXON has given the radical movement a new lease on life; the movement depended on him for its life. For one of the most important features of the counterculture is its volatility; it constantly takes new directions, abandons old heroes, seeks new excitement. Peter Berger, in the remarkable little book he wrote with Richard Neuhaus, *Movement and Revolution*,<sup>1</sup> distinguishes three elements that help clarify this point: the youth culture, the movement, and radical politics. Let me adapt them in my own way in response to the questions Myron Bloy raised for me in "Counterculture and Academic Reform."

\* 537 West 121 St., New York, N.Y. 10027. Reprinted from the May 25, 1970, issue of CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS, Copyright © 1970 by Christianity and Crisis, Inc.

<sup>1</sup> Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1970.

The youth culture has an economic and social base in the technology and the affluence of industrial society that virtually guarantees that millions of young Americans can delay their entrance into culture longer than ever before in history. The "counterculture" is not, of itself, a revolutionary force. It is simply a large number of young people with a number of years on their hands (perhaps a decade) between adolescence and adulthood. What it is seeking is not a revolution but an institutional umbrella, a sanctuary, a home.

The "movement," meanwhile, arises from the effectiveness of the teaching of Jewish, Christian, humanistic—in a word, personalistic—morality to our young people. Many detest the war in Vietnam and, more than that, the bureaucratic, military, imperial, racist attitudes from which it, in part, springs. With a social and economic base that allows them the luxury of doing what they think they ought to do, a goodly proportion of those in the youth culture—not all, perhaps not even a majority—constitute a significant but frequently unfocused political force intent on, for the most part, humane purposes. The movement lacks national leadership; it has neither the discipline, nor the program, nor the endurance of a political party. Its capital of humane morality may easily be squandered.

The radical political groups are a very small minority, even of the movement. They have in a half-dozen short years rendered five or six correct judgments about the course of American and world politics—and, as John Bennett recently observed,<sup>2</sup> theirs has been a solid and admirable achievement. On the other hand, the radical groups commonly share typical American middle-class deficiencies: impatience, a preference for sentiment and action over intelligence and endurance, a love for the confrontations of *High Noon*, a taste for violence, self-pity, a weakness for taking short-cuts and evading difficulties, anti-intellectualism, a tendency toward slogans and simple solutions, intense sectarianism, a fascination with personal moral purity, and a strange longing for death ("since I probably won't be alive five years from now . . .").

<sup>2</sup> "The Solid Contribution of the Young," *Christianity and Crisis*, February 16, 1970.

*Isolation, Disorganization, and Confusion*

Moreover, the radical groups are: (a) almost utterly isolated from other social classes in American society, with none of whom they have a solid, reliable bond, and (b) too internally disorganized and ideologically confused to make their strong passions effective. It is not by accident that, with so much to be done in this nation, they often find themselves feeling helpless, frustrated, and impotent. Not only do they psychologically crave instant success (unused to failure as they are) and tire easily, but they are also saddled by contradictory, hobbling and self-defeating bits and pieces of unassimilated (and unassimilable) ideology.

The main strength of the movement, consequently, and a fortiori of the more intense radical groups, comes not from any insights, programs, or possibilities of their own. It comes from the grave weaknesses of American society. "Being radicalized" seldom consists in acquiring a new political vision, let alone a program or a strategy. It consists, rather, in coming to see with an intense degree of clarity the weaknesses of "the system." Insofar as it is a Yes, radical politics is an amalgam of traditional (although often minority) American values and (usually quite low-grade) Marxist methods of analysis. But radical politics is not very much of a Yes; much more centrally, it is a No to the system. "Resistance," "dissent," "protest," "No!" are its heavy words.

Thus, during most of 1969, not only the movement but also the smaller radical groups were more or less in total disarray. Leadership, direction, spirit were lacking. Internal sectarian quarrels, frustration, dropping out, and despair characterized the vast majority of those involved.

When President Nixon invaded Cambodia, and above all when four young whites were killed at Kent State, millions felt a new surge of energy, purpose, and unity. The movement is parasitic on its carrier. It has come to depend on its carrier for its own political direction. The movement is not so much a "mover" as a protester of flagrant abuse. It has few plans. It waits, and reacts. The leaders within the movement

are not so much activists (strategists, tacticians, trainers, organizers, long-range planners) as sensitive barometers of emotion and articulators of feelings.

Moreover, the riot of the construction workers in New York City on May 8 is a vivid sign of the intense contempt the middle-class student has driven deep into the heart of lower-middle-class whites. It is a mistake to talk about "right" and "left" in such matters. The workers are just as capable of working in some left-wing directions as students; and some students are just as capable of belligerence, violence, and attacks on free speech as the workers.

What is at stake is the hatred of the uneducated who work with their hands for the sons of the privileged—and who cover their embarrassment at their lack of "culture" with pride in their patriotism, their public decency and their observance of the social mores. Ashamed of the American flag, dissenting students shame the men whose pride derives from it. Flaunting new indecencies and flagrantly violating established mores, well-off students undercut the sole sources of public pride left to these men.

Disobeying, the privileged seem to accuse of immorality men who proudly identify morality with obedience. Shouting, "Pigs!" (it is clear that the cops and workers recognize one another as brothers and friends), the privileged rub raw the deep wound of men who feel uncultivated and less than humane.

The *serious* polarization in American life is not between the generations but between classes. Lower-middle-class students, who need education in order to break out of the class in which they were born, are often fiercely opposed to the more affluent radicals. Disguised under temporary alliances based on mutual weakness, black students and white, middle-class radicals are storing up toward each other an immense, deep rage and violent antipathy. (Why all the shock over the deaths of four *white* students? Why the sudden concern about *Cambodia*? Poor blacks can't afford to close the schools.)

*The Revolution Is in Decline*

These points—more could be added—are all by way of qualifying Myron Bloy's point that "what the counterculture is about *is* revolution." The signs of serious, long-range revolutionary intent among radical groups are almost nil, and such signs as do exist are certainly not impressive for their thoughtfulness, their thoroughness, or their nuanced sense of reality. Moreover, the larger movement is so infected with quite classical American prejudices that the "revolution in consciousness" it is supposed to have brought, or to promise, seems clearly to have peaked and to be in decline.

The appearance of a youth culture, however, is a fact with which we shall have to live for a long time. But just because it is a youth culture, it will be both volatile, oscillating, unreliable, and premoral. It is characteristic of youth to be trying various identities on for size, to be experimenting, to enunciate moral ideals in all their purity, and to be imperceptive of the ambiguities of the concrete texture of human life and action. Young people may be exemplars of idealism; they are classically expected to make good troops for causes. They should not be expected to be exemplars of fully moral action; that is, of wisdom-in-action.

The more serious young people today face two severe dangers from their older admirers. First, the romanticism implicit in the liberal tradition has always supposed that the closer to youth, childhood, and the state of the noble savage a person is, the more moral he is. Hence, older people, who should keep their critical cool, are often dazzled by sheer youth, and hardly dare to speak even in the teeth of oracles of nonsense. Second, older people who have born defeats through their own compromises, or even perhaps through their own earlier heroism, sometimes vicariously try again through young people to recapture long-ago feelings of knighthood.

The lessons of the last four decades—the depression, Hitler, the atom bomb, the cold war—have been particularly

chastening to idealists. At some cost, men purposefully instructed themselves in ideological modesty, pragmatism, and limited hopes. (To their efforts, we probably owe our lives.) Many no doubt hanker to be "pure" again and to shuck off the difficult lessons of realism. "Siding with the young" has become cheap grace.

It is possible that for Bloy, as for the vast majority of our generation, the notion of the intellectual life as an end in itself was never more than a "hoary piety." For, in our generation, "relevance" took the form of pragmatism and realism. There were not many who wished to spend their lives in inquiry for its own sake. Among those few, who felt as much a minority then as now, this was no "hoary piety" but life itself.

Moreover, the very notion of inquiry as an end in itself was not often explored in our generation; I, at least, recall having to work out most of its implications for myself. It was not socially comfortable in those days to care too much about one's studies; "grinds" were not popular in the McCarthyite days of anti-intellectualism. "Relevant" fields like the sciences and engineering were multiplying everywhere.

I came to three conclusions. First, unless the university has somewhere among its various novelties and institutes for relevance a cadre of men committed to the demands of critical intelligence, little in the university will be of enduring relevance. Nothing is as irrelevant as the preceding generation's relevance.

### *Relevance and the Focus of Critical Inquiry*

A university wholly committed to social and political relevance here and now is more easily co-opted by the establishment of its times. For relevance, in the short term, means "what works"; and its parameters of inquiry are of necessity foreshortened. One could even argue that the Achilles' heel of liberalism after World War II was its insistence on relevance, under the banners of scientific objectivity, pragmatism,

and hard-headed realism. The radical cry for relevance seems intent on repeating its fathers' central error.

Second, the phrase "critical inquiry for its own sake" does not connote social and political irresponsibility, the ivory tower, or, even, irrelevance. On the contrary, I deem it the most central and the highest social good of *any* society that it free a number of its members for precisely such critical inquiry. Nothing is a greater tribute to human freedom than freedom from utilitarian purposes. Unless there are ends in themselves, sought for their own sake, instrumentalism and manipulation are the only available human life-style.

And among candidates for ends in themselves that might be cherished as a social and political good, critical inquiry has the advantage of being endless, cumulative, self-critical, and exploratory. It opens horizons. It enlarges the liberty of all. It brings satisfactions of the spirit, without which no number of Evinrudes, Hondas, fucks, barbiturates, or drops of acid even come close to assuaging the human heart.

Third, critical inquiry may take as its focus not theory for its own sake but wisdom-in-action for its own sake. It is true that the classical philosophical tradition, like the modern scientific tradition, takes theory as its focus, explanation as its main assignment, a sort of objective map of what things are or how they work as its goal. But when I argue—as Bloy notices—that a new epistemology is both possible and necessary, I mean to suggest that one may break with both the classical and the scientific traditions and still be faithful to inquiry as an end in itself.

Specifically, one may take human action as one's central field of inquiry. What makes human actions human? What makes them wise, humanistic, good? Is it true that men *never* act according to rational, logical principles but *always* according to a sense of reality, story, symbol? In what ways do their culture and their language act in them? In what ways are their science, theories, art, religion present in their actions? One can make action, not theory, the focal point of one's theory.

Moreover, the theoretician who wishes to understand hu-



man action does well, it appears, to place himself in the middle of at least some social and political actions. He does so not as an activist solely, for the sake of immediate relevance alone, but as a theoretician as well, in order to feel in himself and in the social body the pressures, pulls, and heat of action. Theories of action inherited from the past probably draw our attention away from crucial elements in the experience of action; we probably experience action incorrectly.

To develop this notion further would require a great deal more space—in fact, a life's work. Bloy does not do me justice if he thinks I have lost heart; the years of preparation are still heading toward fruition. On one point only have I lost heart—some heart, not all. Those who are serious about revolutionary changes in American society, and particularly in American education, do well not to rely too much upon the youth culture, the movement, or radical political groups in their present forms.

Bloy has probably not taken the body of my work seriously (and why should he?), for he accuses me of an ontology, a theory of the relation of reflection to action, an epistemology, and a theory of the university that it has been, since 1957, the main burden of my work to oppose. Secular liberal humanism—the “modern consciousness” to which we are often told we must conform—has long been my main target. It is, for all its power and achievements, a too narrow, manipulative, alienating and destructive form of consciousness. I am not a child of the Enlightenment; its rationalism is only one episode in my psychic life, a beautiful and powerful one, but also a narrow, parochial one.

But neither am I a child of the Reformation. I inherit a long, wise, and Catholic suspicion of enthusiasm—not only of the sort Luther opposed but also of the sort he manifested. An extended discussion of Tillich will bring this out. When Bloy speaks of “the traditional academic culture,” he seems to be imagining Harvard and other contemporary “secular” colleges. None of those is yet part of my culture; I find myself a foreigner there.

When I hear the words “the traditional academic culture,”

I do not think of Harvard, which is relatively new upon the scene and much given to American forms of relevance, to pragmatism and, intermixed with its genuine and profound humanism, to Tillich's "technological realism." I have always wished to be both ancient and medieval in my sensibilities as well as modern (cf. *Naked I Leave*), on the ground that the standpoints of past ages should be appropriated, cherished and, if transformed, still never merely negated. It is implausible that men in the past were less wise, less clever, less full of love and vitality than we; it is probable that for each of our gains we have suffered losses.

But Tillich's "mystical realism" is not an accurate description of the part of medieval thought that most attracted me. It was precisely the image of Aristotle pointing downward to the earth, here and now, as opposed to Plato's finger pointing toward the heavens that always excited me: The sacramental love of *this* concrete form, *here, now*. God is not "out there."

I thrilled to Gerard Manley Hopkins' notions of Inscape and *Haecceitas*, because that was exactly what I had discovered (which few do) in Aristotle and Aquinas. Catholicism, Chesterton once said, is a thick steak, a glass of stout, and a long cigar. I have always felt in my Catholic friends an unfeigned love of this earth and of the concrete singular that is quite different from that of Protestants.

Tillich's "historical realism" and "self-transcending realism," by contrast, seem to me to be *almost* at the heart of the matter, but not quite. Tillich's image of "the thunderstorm at night, when the lightning throws a blinding clarity over all things, leaving them in complete darkness the next moment" exposes the inadequacy. For that image, to my mind, is precisely too Germanic, too ecstatic, too extraordinary, too discontinuous and, finally, too enthusiastic to pass as an accurate image for human wisdom about oneself, the world, and God.

## *An Inner Commitment to Abstraction and Death*

My God is a God of ordinary things, of routine, of the grind and jading of everyday life—of a simple cigar, of a grain of sand, of boredom and tedium and hard work as well as of moments of rapture. One way I test politicians, theoreticians, poets, activists, philosophers, and friends is by how alert they are to the mysteries of the ordinary. The German quest for “ecstasy,” “revelation,” “faith,” “transparency” gives me a certain fear of those abstractions in whose name concrete, complex human organisms are so often crushed.

In 1965-66, consequently, when I first encountered the counterculture in California (the first editor to see *A Theology for Radical Politics* thought my judgment was being warped by California), it was plain that its instincts were right; that its moral sensitivity, formed by liberal realism, was sharp and hard; and that it had the courage to go for a major cultural breakthrough. Before the radical movement, moral meant John Foster Dulles; “being” was a word to scorn; “commitment” was for the soft-headed; “objective” was an ideal and “subjective” was pejorative; “community” was hardly known; “celebration” and “myth” and “ritual” were from the benighted Catholic Dark Ages before Reason and Protestantism. I am greatly indebted to a movement that has given breathing space to ideas I loved long before the movement appeared and will love long after it disappears.

As a serious revolutionary movement, however, the counterculture is as full of internal contradictions as America's right wing, whose social and economic origins are remarkably similar. The military right wants less federal centralization and more militant anti-Communism abroad; the movement wants leaderlessness, nonorganization and political effectiveness. Both sides wish us to make an act of faith, in order to believe possibilities that are not even dimly plausible. Both are nostalgic about the American past. Both are astonishingly individualistic, evangelical, given to simple moralizing, committed to *laissez faire* (“do your own thing”), careless

with civil liberties. Both love confrontation. Both turn easily to violence out of standard, made-in-U.S.A. impatience. "Hanoi won't do our will? Burn it down!" (For "Hanoi" supply any institution antagonistic to one's will.)

For two years now we have found, among those who sang "All power to the imagination!" a limited and sterile imagination, gimmicky, superficial, burdensomely repetitive. To disguise the repetitiveness, some few in the movement have turned to bombs. Well, escalation is the law of the ecstatic spirit. The limits of human body, of the prickly human character, of human ordinariness and routine and recalcitrance, are exactly what *eks-stasis* is trying to stand outside of. The inner secret of the ecstatic spirit, therefore, is always apocalypse, flames, death. Finite human life can never satisfy it, and is not what it loves: "Burn it down!" The current rash of images of young people going to an early but glorious death is the exact symbolic representation of an inner commitment to abstraction, and thus to death.

If America has grown too powerful for its own wisdom; if our society has grown too large and disconnected and ungovernable; if our very values themselves are not humane values, but too narrow, distorted, and arranged in destructive priority; if our society is sick and needs not reform but revolution; then there is more reason than ever for being suspicious of the enthusiasts. Not all who claim to speak for the Holy Spirit—or for History, or for "A New History"—are to be trusted. A revolution is a long-range affair. No spontaneous, ecstatic salvation is about to come. There must be a very long march, and one's ability to endure the length of the march, not a single dramatic burst of action, is the test of human courage.

"There is no time!" we are told. "In five years, or ten, we will all be dead." And who promised us that the world would not come to an end? The use of the end of the world as a homiletic arm-twister annoys me no less in fundamentalist politics than in fundamentalist religion. Every day is a good day for the world to end, and I prefer not to panic, but to live the way I wish to live, day by day. When the alarms are

passed, there will still be mouths to feed, including sheepish radical mouths.

### *The Task Is Neither Ecstatic nor Pragmatic*

Let me, in conclusion, give several indications concerning the spiritual poverty of the counterculture. The first sign is the Cry, "The pigs." The function of such a cry is dehumanization; and children advantaged enough to be in college have no humane need to scorn the values, mores, and limitations of the men of the lower-middle-classes. The second sign is the random, inexplicable outbreaks of violence, unfailingly a sign of *ressentiment*, of an impoverished imagination, of weakness, of self-doubt. The third sign is the gap between public and private utterance. Radicals in public quite often now say one thing, strike one pose, and in private strike quite another.

The fourth sign is the sectarianism; the implicit, ritualistic imposing of loyalty oaths; the quest for purity. The fifth is the easily exposed bad conscience; the unadmitted extent to which the counterculture is economically parasitic, and the flagrant and open hustling for advantages to which the counterculture is as conspicuously prone as the culture. The sixth is the fervent cry, "Revolution" coupled with the outraged cry, "Repression," as if in surprise. Do revolutionaries expect love, affection, and clemency, too? The seventh is the concentration on "easy targets": middle America, the laborers, the lower-middle-class, the professionals are too hard to reach, so "radicalize" *high school* students!

I conclude that Gustav Weigel was right: "All human things, given enough time, go badly." The radical movement squandered its advantages in six brief years. Mass communications fanned it, industry made millions on it, and soon the American spirit, unflinchingly perceived by de Tocqueville, will seek some new diversion. Younger high school students will seek some fresh, easy way to distinguish themselves from their older brothers and sisters. They will note that "consciousness-expanding" drugs expanded few consciousnesses;

that the politics of rage sated passions but improved the lot of few of the poor, and diminished the right wing and the armies and the police not at all; and that their older brothers and sisters, full of idealistic slogans, entered middle age unprepared, embittered, isolated, and bypassed.

The counterculture is not our salvation. It is a system as corrupt and limited as the one it presumes to revolutionize. It is, however, not nearly as complex, deep, or modest as the poor system in which we are all, now, troubled pilgrims. To refashion the ship on which we sail we must be far more creative than our forebears of 1776. Mere reform is not sufficient. The task is not ecstatic, neither is it pragmatic.

Adults have no right, therefore, either in politics or in education, to abdicate their own wisdom, their own responsibility, their own skills for the sentimentality of some swift salvation through youth. The young have borne us precious gifts, not least in the first days of May, 1970. But political struggles are won by superior organization, by discipline, by long-range plans. And education is reformed, not by wishfulness, but by better logic, better insight, better judgment, better sensitivity, better imagination than what went before.

Bloy confessed of himself at the end of his article: "I haven't the foggiest notion of what counterculture education would look like." For three years I have been gaining some fairly clear notions of what counterculture education will look like. The prospect is pretty awful. That verification will come for others, too, when they see the fruits by which the tree is to be judged. Let us hope, however, that the tree learns soon to send down deeper roots and gains a longer life.

In this respect, two trends are hopeful. Late in April, Senator Edward Kennedy received a standing ovation when he told a large audience of students: When you grow tired of marching, demonstrations, picketing, and violence, come back to the real sources of change: electoral politics. Last year, the youth culture was learning that electoral politics doesn't work; this year they have learned that disruption and demonstration don't work, either. So the wheel has turned. Possibly, many will learn that one defeat is not a whole campaign.

Politics is not a field in which terms like *victory* and *defeat* are clear-cut, total, pure.

Second, the radical wing has been somewhat discredited—by the perceptible unhappiness of its members, its factionalism, its tantrums, its bombers, and the ruthless tendencies of some of its leaders. Changing the Congress seems to many students a limited but more effective step than tying their emotions to instant revolution. The moral authority on campus has swung away from the extremist radicals and toward the center. It is a propitious moment to forge an organization out of the movement, to give it sharp political focus and electoral clout. Many eager spirits are waiting. Leadership could create a tide that might last a decade. We desperately need political leadership.

# Church, Caste, and Women

*Jeanne Richie*

Advocates of women's rights will find that they have a strong champion in Jeanne Richie, public health nurse and free-lance writer. Her identification of our "democratic" society as one with a rigid caste system based on sex may not sit well with some, especially in view of her focus on the subjugation and exploitation of women by the church in particular. Nonetheless, she is no strident "female chauvinist"; she points out how the sex-caste system is detrimental not only to women but to men as well. And she comes up with several specific and positive suggestions as to how church people can help eliminate that system. For some time a resident of Hawaii, Miss Richie at last report had moved to Aberdeen, Scotland, to spend a year "writing about some of the things I feel strongly about." As was the case with an earlier article she wrote for *The Christian Century*\* ("The Unresponsive Pew," October 8, 1969), her piece on women's rights (January 21, 1970) generated considerable reader reaction, both pro and con.

NOW AND AGAIN voices are raised to remind us that the position of women in the church is something less than satisfactory. But this protest is easily ignored in the clamor about other problems. In this regard, the church pattern follows that which obtains in other areas of American life today.

The fact is that in some ways the situation of women has deteriorated rather than improved in the past thirty years. For example, the percentage of women enrolled in our graduate schools is shrinking, and the proportion of women in the

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professions remains at a low level compared with most European countries. The push for recognition of women as human beings is indeed—as Carolyn G. Heilburn of Columbia University says—“the most unsuccessful of all revolutions.”

It is my conviction that the problem of women's status in American society is urgent, that it cannot be postponed while we attend to apparently more pressing matters—race, youth, war, inflation, the pollution of our air and water. I believe that the systematic subordination of women in America must be ended *before* these other problems we face will yield to attack. I believe also that this is a question which should be of particular concern to our churches, since they are so heavily dependent on the support of women and since few institutions so systematically deny women full participation.

### *Social Stratification*

For the purpose of this paper, let us think of men and women as separate castes. A caste, according to the *Penguin Encyclopedia*, is “one of a series of hierarchically arranged ranks in a socially stratified system, . . . caste membership being by birth and not alterable during an individual's lifetime.” In the classical Hindu caste system, each caste is associated with certain occupations. This holds in the U.S. sex-caste system also. Men occupy the well-paid positions which give power and prestige, independence of action, and control over resources; women do the ill paid or unpaid work which is subordinate and supportive in nature. Women's work, whether in the home or outside, is characteristically monotonous, repetitive, and confining. As psychologist Sylvia Hartman points out (in the January 1969 issue of *McCall's*), “. . . nobody, neither men nor women, really wants to do about 99.9 per cent of what constitutes ‘women's work.’ Not only is it boring, but it is not valued by society.” There are exceptions, of course. The American sex-caste system is more permeable than the Hindu caste system. A few, a very few,

of our women do become judges, get elected to Congress, earn professorships in universities.

Most work settings in the United States are characterized by a division of labor based on sex. Typical is the secretary-businessman relationship. A recent article in *Newsweek* describes more frankly than is the custom this division of labor and offers some intimations as to its destructive quality. Jack Nicklaus and F. Lee Bailey, the article tells us, are organizing Envoy International Town Clubs, Inc., "a haven away from home for the traveling executive." The "clubs" are equipped with attractive young women "who will take dictation, fire off a letter, untangle snarled airline reservations, send telegrams and arrange conferences." In explaining the need for such services, Bailey says: "The thing that grinds you down traveling is doing the things a secretary normally does. I wouldn't want to make six 'phone calls to find Jack Nicklaus, for example. I'd like to just call a secretary and say 'find him.'" Secretaries, naturally, are by definition people who are *not* ground down by these chores.

Or consider the physician-nurse division of labor. That about 7 per cent of U.S. physicians are women and 1 per cent of nurses are men hardly alters the sex-caste character of the relationship. While physicians are the highest paid occupational group in the nation, nurses are notoriously underpaid. Physicians carry out dramatic procedures such as surgery and give orders to nurses, who for their part do the unpleasant, repetitive maintenance jobs.

The church is one of the settings in which the sex-caste system obtains in its purest form. The ministry is almost exclusively a male fastness. Only outside the mainstream of Protestantism, in groups such as Unity and in the black churches, are clergywomen to be found in any numbers. Although church membership and attendance are predominantly female, the lay boards which make church policy are largely male. Laymen's Sunday really *is* laymen's Sunday. The Sunday school, however, is largely staffed by women (almost invariably unpaid), and church planners can count on the women to prepare refreshments for any function—and to

clean up afterwards. A young woman who wants to make a career of religious work will find that about the only opening available to her is religious education, where she will always be in a subordinate and assisting relationship to the minister. There is no provision for her upward mobility into the ministry. For all practical purposes, the ministry is a caste system.

### *Humiliation and Instability*

Our national and religious ethic is strongly egalitarian and thus by definition opposed to caste systems. Since, however, we have something like a caste system we might profitably review its undesirable consequences. The most obvious is the humiliation inflicted on those who are categorized as inferior. The lower-caste member is likely to resent those who define themselves as superior and to feel frustrated because of his inability to improve his status. Our recent intensive education in the caste system that functions in respect to our black fellow citizens has made us all familiar with that system's destructive results, from apathy to fury.

Another consequence is loss of human resources. How much skill, intelligence, and sensitivity are forfeited by the community that erects artificial barriers which make it impossible for some individuals to develop their potentialities? We cannot tell, of course. But it is clear that whenever such barriers were removed, large amounts of unsuspected talent were released, to the common benefit.

In our society, because of their incompatibility with the national ethic, caste systems have another defect: instability. In India, despite governmental attempts to abolish it, the caste system persists into the present—at least in part because it is accepted by the community. Such is not the case in our country. Of late we have witnessed explosions in our caste or crypto-caste systems—most notably in the black-white caste system, but also in the armed services (where the professional officers comprise one stratum, and the men, particu-

larly the draftees, another) and in our universities (where the faculty make up the upper and the students the lower caste). These systems have proved least stable where they have been most rigid, where exploitation of the lower caste has been highest and the irresponsibility of the upper caste greatest. However, in all these cases the threatening lower-caste element was largely male. So far the sex-caste system has proved more stable, partly because of the relative passivity of women. But there are indications that this system is also wavering.

### *Mutual Exploitation*

It is a truism that in an exploiter-exploited relationship, the exploiter destroys himself in the same degree in which he destroys his victim; that the oppressor is as much a prisoner of the bonds he forges as is the oppressed. The sex-caste system very possibly does more damage to men than to women. And its baneful effects can fall upon children, too.

Throughout history men have for the most part held the power and the wealth and have kept women in a subordinate and dependent condition. But, while men have often exploited women (usually sexually), women have often manipulated and exploited men. The Bible makes heroines of two of the most successful manipulators—Esther, who gets her husband, the king, drunk in order to save her people, and Ruth, who seduces Boaz in order to gain security for herself and Naomi. On the other hand, Herodias and Salome come down to us as completely depraved because of their evil machinations. The fact is that female manipulation of the male may have good results or bad. The question here is: Does not this pattern of mutual exploitation impair the quality of relations between the sexes?

It is a pattern that has been particularly characteristic of courtship in the United States. The man tries to score points in such terms as sexual favors obtained and his friends' rating of his "dates' " looks. The girl scores points in terms of pres-

ents she can inveigle her "boy friend" to give her, the social experience he can provide her, and his earning capacity. Obviously, this kind of thing is not the basis for a good marriage and in many instances is certainly a precursor to divorce.

One of the major accusations of our young rebels today is that our society is hypocritical. This accusation is usually focused on race and war. But is it not likely that these young people who cry out against hypocrisy are products of homes where the relationship between the parents, supposedly based on affection, was actually based on mutual exploitation?

Other threats to the well-being and stability of the family arise from the sex-caste system. The woman who sacrifices her own identity in marriage tends to overidentify with her husband (the Lady Macbeth syndrome) or with her children (the Jewish Mother syndrome). The woman who finds herself at loose ends when her children have left home may deteriorate into triviality, gossip, or even alcoholism, with consequent damage to family life.

The commercialization of sex is one of the most conspicuous products of the sex-caste system. So long as women depend on men for economic security and social status, they are a likely target for products that promise them help in competing for the more desirable men. This makes fine business for people in advertising, but eventually it begins to appear that instead of products, it is human beings that are for sale.

The differential in the longevity of men and women in this country is at least partly attributable to the sex-caste system. As is well known, women live, on the average, five or six years longer than men, and their survival advantage is increasing. Less well known is the fact that in the life expectancy of males the United States ranks eighteenth, behind most other industrialized countries. Men may guard as their own the more rewarding types of work, but these occupations are also the most hazardous to life. For example, coronary occlusions and alcoholism—which occur with higher frequency among men—can be associated with the more rewarding and demanding jobs. The physician may complain about his long

hours and heavy responsibilities, but he can bring himself to share decision-making with nurses only to a very limited degree, and he is grudging in delegating responsibility to them lest they become competitive. In short, men guard the prerogatives of their caste, maintain vigilance against incursions by women—and shorten their own lives.

### *Erosion of Male Integrity*

Again, the sex-caste system tends to erode the male's integrity. In his efforts to undermine women's self-esteem so as to "keep them in their place," he tends to distort reality and become self-deluded. Here is Nathan S. Kline, a psychiatrist at Rockland State Mental Hospital in Orangeburg, New York, speaking on the therapeutic value of work: "Most people in our culture work—if they're fortunate—not just to make money, but because they derive satisfaction from what they are doing. We have needs that our work helps us fulfill. Power, visibility, they are almost too numerous to mention."<sup>1</sup> Make no mistake: if Dr. Kline has visibility, it is at least in part because he is standing on a pyramid of invisible women (and a few invisible men): secretaries, medical librarians, clerks, receptionists, nurses, occupational therapists, social workers. If Dr. Kline has power, it is largely power to command an army of efficient and obedient women. Dr. Kline has made substantial contributions to psychiatry; he might be able to make even larger contributions if he were more honest with himself and others.

If men are afraid of competition from women, they seem even more concerned lest women refuse one day to do the unpleasant jobs—which might then have to be done by men. So they play a sort of unending confidence game. They speak of housekeeping as "creative," even as "sacred." In their efforts to keep women confined to drudgery, they sometimes become almost coercive. Here are Norman Lobsenz and Clark Blackburn in *How to Stay Married*, a Family Service

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times Magazine*, April 6, 1969, p. 54.

Association of America publication: "... the wives who feel trapped may have chiefly themselves to blame. They will not or cannot accept the realities of marriage: that it is part of a wife's bargain to maintain her home, to care for her children, and to be a helpmate in every sense of the word." *Her home? Her children? And just where is this bargain spelled out?*

### *The Arrogance of Power*

Senator William Fulbright has spoken of "the arrogance of power" in our country. In his view this arrogance is demonstrated chiefly in our relations with foreign countries. But the "arrogance of power" makes itself felt at home too—in highways that cut through residential neighborhoods, in wholesale destruction of the landscape, in the contempt of the viewing public shown by television moguls. No doubt our military might and our national wealth give rise to arrogance. It bespeaks the peculiar lack of humility, patience, and adaptability that is characteristic of men who have been freed of tedium and drudgery—in other words, of men who have available to them a noncritical, noncompetitive servan-caste, people who not only carry out orders rapidly and efficiently but also with flattery and charm. This corruption of men in positions of authority is the worst damage done to our national life by the sex-caste system. "The United States is deep in malaise, and neither the government nor the people feel they have the power to do anything about it"—so says the noted political philosopher Hannah Arendt.<sup>2</sup> Certainly this frustration grows partly out of the enormous complexity of the problems we face. But certainly too the failure to find solutions is partly a consequence of lack of skill and patience in the men who have the responsibility for setting the nation's course.

These are men who are accustomed to cry, "Fiat! Fiat!"

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, May 25, 1969, p. 40.

and it is done; men who are accustomed to making decisions that bind other people to courses of action in which these others have no say. These are men who are short on the skills of persuasion and negotiation, who have too little familiarity with the patience, the attention to details, and the drudgery necessary for dealing with the hideously complex tasks of our time. I question whether we shall have real improvement in the functioning of our national life without the elimination of *all* our caste systems.

Now, to return to the sex-caste system as it manifests itself in our churches. Happily, Ralph Ellison's "invisible man" has become visible. Has he been replaced by an "invisible woman"? Apparently he has, so far as the church is concerned. American ministers often reproach their congregations for excessive materialism—especially on stewardship Sunday, when the minister suggests that we can become more spiritual, as it were, by making larger contributions to the church. Every minister knows, of course, that we are living in an "affluent society." What no minister seems to know is the economic situation of the individuals in his own congregation. Do *all* the elderly widows have adequate income and housing? Are there no young widows trying desperately to support small children without a father's assistance? No women with husbands incapacitated by illness or alcoholism? No one burdened by massive medical bills? No struggling graduate students? If there are, they are invisible on stewardship Sunday.

At other times too one suspects that the women in his congregation are invisible to the minister. If he is a social activist who wants the church to become an agent of social change, he will assail his parishioners for not doing as much as they should for the poor. But are there no teachers present in the pews? No social workers, nurses, home economists, other women in service occupations? Surely there are a few, and surely some of them are already working with people in very real need of help. Are their contributions of no value?

The struggle of women to achieve full recognition as human beings is parallel and very similar to that of the Negro in



America. In recent years churches have acknowledged their obligation to support the campaign of black Americans for full rights. Unless something has escaped my attention, there is no comparable concern for women's rights on the part of churches. How is it that clergymen in general have such deep concern and compassion for those beyond their doors but can disregard completely a group for whom they are officially responsible? When they urge their white congregations to become more active in assisting minority groups, they are in effect asking one disadvantaged group to help another disadvantaged group—asking women to abandon their own struggle and devote their energies to helping a group that is not much worse off than the women themselves. Yet these same ministers are dismayed at the lack of response from their congregations.

### *To End the Sex-Caste System*

I would like to suggest some things church people might do to end the sex-caste system. First, they must recognize that this system operates on all sides—as those who are alert will readily discover. Only then will responsible people be in a position to take responsible action. One hopes that in the future fewer people will imitate the Methodist official who objected to publication of an issue of *motive* which attacked the sexual exploitation of women in this country. This official apparently finds an obscene situation more tolerable than the use of obscene words to describe it.

Second, churchmen must acquire information. Let them read, for a starter, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. Strident, fuzzy, and overlong as that book is, it does point out some of the stultifying effects of confinement to house-keeping on women. Let them read also Caroline Bird's *Born Female*—a far superior book in all ways—which focuses on the economic discrimination against working women. And let them become familiar with the life stories of women. I have in mind Elizabeth Neway's statement in her review<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Harper's Magazine*, November 1967, p. 120.

of the biographies of four women—Isak Dinesen, Edith Sitwell, Marcia Davenport, and Svetlana Alliluyeva: "There is very little humor and much tragedy in these books, and above all a sense of struggle." Again, let them study the material put out by the Unity movement, particularly its weekly. Readers of this material should put aside all questions of theology and think of Unity as offering a set of tactics for people who have very little room for maneuvering. Few men seem to appreciate how limited are the choices and opportunities open to most women.

Third, let the churches widen their services to their women members. I sometimes wonder whether ministers keep any records at all on the families in their congregations—their needs, their problems, their strengths; without good records acceptable services can hardly be provided. If the minister cannot make home visits to all his parishioners at least once a year, he should recruit the assistance of someone who can. If he serves only those who come to him, he is likely to serve the most aggressive rather than the most needful.

At the same time, churches should establish programs that give women more responsibility in decision-making. There are those who think that the Episcopalians took a step forward when they invited each of the nation's dioceses to send, in addition to the regular delegates, one youth, one woman, and one minority-group representative to the Church's Special General Convention as nonvoting participants. To me, however, this looks like cheap tokenism. Women need what men who are interested in church work already have: an orderly sequence of assignments of increasing and genuine responsibility.

Another positive step would be development of an active program to recruit women to the ministry. Some theological schools report that their students are less and less interested in serving parishes. (Incidentally, one wonders what kind of procedure these schools use for screening applicants.) Quite possibly women might find attractive the parish assignments some young men are now rejecting.

Finally, there are some things ministers and churches should *not* do. It is easy enough to flail at symptoms rather

than causes, but quite unprofitable. For instance, ministers occasionally denounce prostitution, but what does that accomplish? I have never heard any suggestion that the church community act to eliminate the economic factors contributing to prostitution.

Nor can the churches remain passive. The stakes are too high. George Gallup recently reported, on the basis of a survey, that seven out of every ten adults think religion is losing its influence in this country, and that church attendance has sunk to a new low. "These survey results," he said, "represent one of the most dramatic reversals in the history of polling." Of the people who are active in the church, a majority are women. But this remnant can be driven out of the church, if they continue to be invisible to ministers and if they are forced to remain the subordinate group in a sex-caste system. Consequently, those who are concerned for the well-being of the church will work to eliminate that system. Besides, it is the right thing to do.

## *V: Personal Effects*

# Job and Auschwitz

*Richard L. Rubenstein*

For Richard L. Rubenstein, "the very category of evil is meaningless in dealing with Auschwitz"; therefore Job cannot possibly serve as an adequate metaphor for reconciling Auschwitz with the existence of the biblical God. Unlike Job, the Jews in the death camps were stripped of their last shred of dignity. "Never in their worst nightmares could they [Job's authors] have imagined a descent into hell so total yet so banal, rationalized, and bureaucratic as the twentieth-century death camp." Yet despite the horror of Auschwitz—and what he regards as the absence of God—Rabbi Rubenstein makes his way to affirmation, positing an alternative religious future which participates in "the delights and the searing pains of human abundance." Formerly Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Rubenstein is now Professor of Religion at Florida State University at Tallahassee. Author of *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism*, *The Religious Imagination*, and *Morality and Eros*, his latest book is *Passionate Apostle: The Career of Paul of Tarsus*. His article was first published in the Summer 1970 *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*:\* it will later appear as the first chapter of a volume titled *Job and Auschwitz*.

FOR MORE THAN two millennia the figure of Job, the righteous sufferer, has served as an image which enabled men to speak truthfully about their destiny without compromising their faith in the biblical God. Trust and skepticism are wonderfully balanced in the Job tradition. Whenever it seemed impossible to reconcile the existence of a just and omnipotent God with unmerited suffering, the example

\* 3041 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10027. Reprinted by permission.

of Job helped to preserve faith. The image of Job assured the relatively innocent sufferer that his was a shared destiny which was not without its special dignity. If the Job tradition could not fathom the religious meaning of gratuitous suffering, it could at least give men a model of how to respond with great nobility. Unfortunately, the radically novel experiences of the twentieth century could not have been anticipated by the biblical writers even in their most demonic fantasies. Job does not provide a helpful image for comprehending Auschwitz.

Men are in no sense exempt from the vicissitudes of biological existence common to all forms of animal life. Nevertheless, men alone have indulged in the illusion of a world potentially devoid of suffering, pain, and death. This fantasy has been especially potent among those who believe that the world has come into being through the will of an omnipotent Creator. If those aspects of existence which men find hard to bear are ultimately the expression of the Creator's power, one can always hope that he might change things. The belief that things are the way they are because of the will of God and the hope that they could be different were God, so to speak, to change his mind underlies the world-view of biblical man, both Jewish and Christian. The hope for salvation follows from the biblical belief in creation as an act of divine will.

### *Punitive Existence?*

Biblical man was also convinced that God ruled his world in justice. Given this conviction, as well as the fact that few men can accept their inexorable path to decay and annihilation, it is not surprising that biblical man came to regard such biological limitations of existence as sickness and death as inherently punitive. Classical Jewish and Christian interpreters of the biblical tradition agree that had Adam remained without sin, suffering and death would not have been punitively inflicted by God upon mankind. The rabbis assert,

"There is no death without sin. . . ."<sup>1</sup> St. Paul echoes the same conviction in his crucial myth of the Last Adam: "Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness led to acquittal and life for all men."<sup>2</sup> Common to both traditions is the pathetic hope that there is a way out of mortality, and that it cannot be said of the human condition that it has no exit.

Biblical man paid a high price for his hope. At one level, the price was paid in the conflict he was compelled to endure between his ordinary powers of observation and his yearning for salvation. This tension has been reflected in the conflict between faith and reason. When common sense found itself in opposition to religious belief, the victory usually went to faith. Perhaps Søren Kierkegaard's greatest contribution to modern theology lies in the extraordinary lucidity with which he comprehended what is required to maintain biblical faith against common sense. Kierkegaard rejects all attempts to harmonize the conflict between our knowledge of the indifferent givenness of things and belief in a God who could, if he but chose, so alter the human condition that it could fulfill our most archaic wishes for immortality and eternal felicity.

Kierkegaard's passionate insistence upon the absolute chasm between the understanding of man and the ways of God is strangely echoed in the works of the contemporary novelist and death-camp survivor, Elie Wiesel. In spite of the unspeakable existence thrust upon him at Auschwitz, Wiesel has never been able to reject belief in God. He could only make sense of his relationship to God in terms of the image of Job. Wiesel writes:

I prefer to take my place on the side of Job, who chose questions and not answers, silence and not speeches. Job never understood his own tragedy which, after all, was only that of an individual betrayed by God. . . .<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shabbat 55a. Cf. the discussion on the issue in Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Religious Imagination* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), pp. 46 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 5:18.

<sup>3</sup> Elie Wiesel, *Legends of Our Time* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 181.

Elsewhere, Wiesel is prepared to see God as a madman, but he is not prepared to deny him.<sup>4</sup>

The book of Job would never have been written were it not for this agonizing conflict between religious belief and common sense. Had men in biblical times been convinced that they dwelt in a cosmos entirely indifferent to human categories of good and evil, the problem of the innocent sufferer would have been meaningless. Suffering and death would simply have been regarded as inevitable. If conflict was to be found in the experience of the relatively innocent sufferer, it would have been portrayed as the conflict between his actual experience of misfortune and his yearnings for safety and security. Similarly, had men in biblical times been wholly convinced that, despite all appearances, an omnipotent and just Divinity is the ultimate author of all events, there would have been no problem of the innocent sufferer. It is only because an influential group of men during the biblical period stood in a kind of religious border-country, unable to reject God or to regard all human misfortune simply as punitive, that the book of Job became a permanent part of the religious heritage of the Judeo-Christian world.

### *Loss and Infanticide*

The book's prologue divides Job's calamities into two categories, the loss of children and possessions and the afflictions visited upon his person. As grievous a calamity as was the loss of offspring, there may have been latent factors in Job's acceptance which had little to do with religious trust. David Bakan has pointed out that the problem of coping with the infanticidal impulse looms exceedingly large in biblical religion. Bakan has argued cogently against Freud that the ex-

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Wiesel, p. 6. Cf. Maurice Friedman, *To Deny Our Nothingness* (New York: Delacorte, 1967), pp. 348-354. Friedman has described Wiesel as an exemplification of "the modern Job." By describing the predicament of contemporary man in terms of Job, Friedman has been especially helpful in formulating the issue under discussion in this paper. Cf. Friedman, *Problematic Rebel* (New York: Random House, 1963).



perience of biblical man witnessed few instances of parricide but many of infanticide.<sup>5</sup> If Bakan's analysis is correct, Job's response to the death of his children is more complicated than would appear initially from his overly brief affirmation: "The Lord gave, the Lord took away. Blessed be the Lord's name."<sup>6</sup> If there were any residue of infanticidal impulse in Job, the pain he experienced could be seen as the pain of his conflicting feelings. The protective father within Job was aggrieved; the unconscious infanticide was not entirely displeased. It is not necessary to agree with Bakan's contention that the book's latent content deals with Job as infanticide to recognize that Job was not exempt from the impulse as it manifested itself in his time. There is even a suggestion of a similar impulse in God, who is depicted as entirely willing to do away with Job's children in order to prove a point with Satan. Throughout the book there is much discussion of Job's misfortune, but not a word about the sons and daughters who perish simply because God wants to win an argument. We ought not to ascribe this omission to the "lower" moral sensitivity of the times. On the contrary, what was involved was biblical man's fortunate capacity to objectify his own conflicting impulses in the image of a Father-God. By so doing biblical man was able to cope constructively with some of his most disturbing inner conflicts. Both the Akedah story and the tradition of the atoning crucifixion of Jesus contain similar intuitions of the infanticidal impulse projected upon the Father-God. One of biblical man's most valued resources in dealing with his conflicting impulses was his image of God. Part of the religious crisis of our times derives from the fact we are no longer able to project human conflict and impulse into credible contemporary images of God.

Satan wisely rejects the loss of children as a test of Job's

<sup>5</sup> David Bakan, *The Duality of Human Existence* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 197 ff. and *Disease, Pain and Sacrifice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 96 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Job 1:21. All translations from Job are taken from *Job*, trans. by Marvin Pope (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965). However, where Pope uses the expression "Yahweh" I substitute "The Lord."

uprightness. He maintains that Job can hardly be seen as a victim until his own person is directly afflicted:

Skin after skin.  
 All that a man has  
 He will give for his life.  
 Reach out and strike him,  
 Touch his bone and flesh,  
 And he will curse you to your face.<sup>7</sup>

Satan in effect demands that God change Job's position from that of Abraham, who is called upon to offer up his own offspring, to that of Isaac, who must accept the victim's hazards. Satan contends that Job will not exhibit Isaac's unfaltering devotion or trust. This is a wager God is willing to make.

### *Attack upon Ego*

Job is then visited with an affliction so drastic that his only response is to curse the day of his birth and wish for a speedy end to his miserable existence. The term used for Job's affliction is *shêhîn*, a skin disease. In all probability Job was afflicted with an advanced case of leprosy such that his entire body was covered by burning, pussy, ulcerous boils which left him prostrate.<sup>8</sup> Looking and smelling like human refuse, he could find no more suitable place of habitation than the village dunghill. It is small wonder that death became for Job a longed-for release. The skin is the border between the organism and its environment. The ego is initially a body-ego and remains so throughout life.<sup>9</sup> A total attack on the skin is a drastic attack on the ego as such. Everything which lent stability, continuity, and integrity to Job's ego was decisively threatened. Quite incidentally, his ego had ceased to have any sense of masculine competence. As a result of his affliction, he was functionally castrated even if his actual organ

<sup>7</sup> Job 2:4,5.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pope, *Job*, p. 21, n. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York: Norton, 1945), pp. 34 ff.

remained somewhat intact. Job asserts: "My flesh is clad with worms and dust; My skin cracks and oozes."<sup>10</sup> Even sleep is no escape for Job:

If I say, "My couch will comfort me,  
My bed will ease my complaint,"  
Then You dismay me with dreams,  
Terrify me with nightmares,  
Till my soul would choose strangling  
Death rather than my loathsome pains.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, Job's ego retains its integrity. Whatever may have been the ambiguities of his response to the loss of children and property, the violent attack on his ego does not produce a breakdown. Job never asks for a restoration of his former prosperity and health. In his reply to Eliphaz he demands: "Have I said: . . . 'Rescue me from an enemy?' 'Redeem me from brigands?'"<sup>12</sup> Job seeks insight, not escape: "Teach me, and I will be quiet; show me where I have erred."<sup>13</sup>

Erik Erikson has described the possessor of ego integrity as "ready to defend the dignity of his own life style against all physical and economic threats."<sup>14</sup> That description certainly applies to Job. The psychological importance of the book rests in large measure upon the fact that it describes in greater detail than elsewhere in the Bible a personality with an authentically adult, integrated ego. Job faces a catastrophic crisis in the second half of life. He retains his dignity, his clarity, and his honor. He does so without falsifying his own insights or his culture's canons of behavioral appropriateness. He challenges some widely accepted opinions of his time, but does so in such a way that his religious life is deepened rather than perverted. The rabbis maintained that Job never in fact

<sup>10</sup> Job 7:5.

<sup>11</sup> Job 7:13-15.

<sup>12</sup> Job 6:22,23.

<sup>13</sup> Job 6:24.

<sup>14</sup> Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 140.

existed. The purpose of the tale was to serve as an example.<sup>15</sup> This would mean that the fiction we have inherited represents the objectification of a new level of consciousness by the book's author(s) and redactor(s). The men who gave us this book understood the phenomenon of ego integrity.

Job neither breaks nor does he become rigid. His friends are convinced that misfortune is ultimately punitive in character. They believe Job must be guilty simply because of what has happened to him. In their eyes, the fact of gross misfortune alone is sufficient evidence of Job's guilt before God. Nor ought we to be too quick to denounce the inelasticity of the friend's view of reality. There is a fundamental issue at stake in their refusal to alter their inherited theology in the light of real evidence to the contrary. The friends of Job and their traditionalist successors to this day cannot face existence as a wasteland ultimately indifferent in its givenness to all human aspiration and yearning. If Job is in reality innocent, one must draw conclusions even more drastic than those drawn by Job when he cries out:

"Guiltless as well as wicked He destroys."  
 When the scourge slays suddenly,  
 He mocks the despair of the innocent.  
 Earth is given to the control of the wicked.  
 The faces of her judges He covers—  
 If not He, then who?<sup>16</sup>

### *Accusing God*

Job accuses God. He never faces the possibility that the God he accuses does not exist, that earth is merely the dumb witness to the succession of amoral passion, power, and violence we call the human adventure. Perhaps the author(s) and redactor(s) of the book had yet to conclude that it was at

<sup>15</sup> Baba Bathra 15a. Cf. Bakan, *Disease, Pain and Sacrifice*, pp. 100 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Job 9:22-24.

least thinkable that Job's sufferings, if unmerited, could mean that God is neither madman nor infanticide, that the biblical God is nothing and of no account save as an objectification of biblical man's conflicting self-image. In rabbinic times Elisha ben Abuya, confronted by the gratuitous suffering of the innocent, was compelled to conclude "*Leth din v'leth dyan.*" (There is no judgment and there is no Judge.)<sup>17</sup> Since there is nothing to indicate that biblical man was less intelligent or insightful than men in our generation, we have no reason to believe that biblical man was incapable of drawing conclusions similar to those which Elisha ben Abuya drew. It is my opinion that the author(s) repressed their insights because they were fearful of the price to be paid for living in a spiritual and metaphysical wasteland. To this day those traditionalists, who echo the friends of Job in their insistence that misfortune is evidence of estrangement from God, have at least the indirect justification that few men can really live in the wasteland. By taking his stand for a world which makes sense in terms of God's justice and human sin, the traditionalist asks a sufferer like Job to become a new kind of Isaac: for the sake of a coherent religious world, without which the generality of mankind could not survive, the traditionalist asks the sufferer to regard his pain as a sign of divine punishment.

If I may be permitted my own fantasy of what such a traditionalist might say to a Job-like sufferer, I would imagine him as saying:

I know your sufferings are incredibly painful. I wish I could alleviate them but I cannot. I know that the worst mental anguish you experience is your fear that God has inexplicably become your enemy, that you have been accounted as one guilty and deserving of misfortune. Nevertheless, I implore you to confess a guilt you cannot understand and to beg God's forgiveness and mercy. Your sacrifice is greater than Isaac's. Isaac was only asked to submit to his father's violence without being accounted guilty. You are asked both to submit and to confess your guilt even though you regard yourself as innocent.

<sup>17</sup> Kiddushin 39b.

I ask you to reflect deeply before you question God's justice. If you are really innocent, God may very well be a demon. If he is a demon, all of our efforts to create a decent world in the face of human cupidity and lust will collapse. Was it not difficult enough for us to control man's worst impulses when we were really convinced of God's power and justice? We thought the Creator was our ally. We had a chance. If God is the demonic power who smites the innocent and allies himself to the wicked, we have no chance. We might as well satisfy our worst lusts until we are overcome by someone more powerful or by the demon-Creator himself.

The traditionalist would continue:

There is even a more terrifying possibility: if you are innocent, there may be no Creator. Even a demon-God offers men the hope that they are not totally alone in the cosmos, that they may find at least some twisted hope in serving the Satanic Creator. If there is no God, we are nakedly alone in a silent cosmos. We are of no greater significance than the ugliest insect, and, like the most repugnant organism, we have nothing to hope for but everlasting oblivion.

Even if you are absolutely convinced of your own innocence, even if you honestly believe that the Creator is nothing and of no account, lie for the sake of humanity. Men cannot bear to live in the world you, and perhaps we, know to be the real one. Confess your sin; bow before a God who may not exist. Perhaps all of us must deceive each other, pretending that God rules the universe in justice. Nevertheless, it is better thus. We shall never know death. We will assuredly know the terrors of a godless world should men cease to hope and to believe.

My fantasy is not entirely original. After all, there are only a limited number of theological alternatives available to human credulity. In the nineteenth century Dostoevsky offered a somewhat similar tale in his "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor." We must not too quickly dismiss the friends of Job or their contemporary heirs. More can be said in their defense than is usually suggested. Nevertheless, we can surmise what the Job-like sufferers reply might be:

You ask me to offer myself up as a sacrifice. I would gladly offer my body for the sake of mankind, but you ask more of me than your God asked even of Jesus. Jesus willingly gave himself for the salvation of mankind, but he expired as an innocent. He died for *other men's* sins. Nowhere do we find even a hint that he was compelled to see himself as a sinner. I can sacrifice my own life; I cannot sacrifice my integrity. Let the demons of heaven and hell do their worst. I cannot do this for God or for man.

The book reports that Job was not required to sacrifice his integrity. Job is overwhelmed by the sheer presence of God at the end of his trial. He recognizes his limitations of strength and understanding. He will be silent. He remains no closer to understanding than before, but at least he now has the implicit understanding that the mysterious God is not his enemy. Above all, he has the incredible satisfaction of knowing that he has not caved in, that he has taken the worst and remained his own man. Even in the presence of God there is no surrender. There is great dignity in both of Job's replies to God:

Lo, I am small, how can I answer you?  
My hand I lay on my mouth;  
I have spoken once, I will not reply;  
Twice, but I will say no more.<sup>18</sup>

and

I know you can do all things;  
No purpose of yours can be thwarted. . . .  
I talked of things I did not know,  
Wonders beyond my ken. . . .  
I have heard of you by hearsay,  
But now my own eyes have seen you;  
So I recant and repent  
In dust and ashes.<sup>19</sup>

At the end of his trial, Job finds himself beyond resentment. He recants before the presence of God. Nevertheless, had

<sup>18</sup> Job 39:4-5.

<sup>19</sup> Job 42:2-6.

God not revealed himself, there is little doubt that Job's protest would have remained essentially unchanged. Job has demonstrated that maintaining one's own integrity constitutes a greater righteousness than obedient acceptance of traditional norms which do violence to one's deepest self-perceptions.

### *Job and Auschwitz*

We have already noted that one contemporary sufferer has seen Job as the most appropriate model for a religious response to the death camps. Elie Wiesel's Job-like affirmation of trust in God after Auschwitz has been met with almost universal respect among those who have encountered his writings or his person. I share that regard. I concur in the personal appropriateness of Wiesel's use of the example of Job in order to comprehend his own situation. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that the use of Job as a metaphor for the experience of the Jewish people and as a means of reconciling Auschwitz with the existence of the biblical God of history has at best a questionable validity.

At Auschwitz the vast majority of Jews had no opportunity to be likened to Job, because of the selection process. As new inmates entered the camp, they were divided into two groups, one marked for immediate death and the other for some form of slave labor. The greater part of those who entered were marked for immediate execution. They cannot be likened to Job for the simple reason that Job survives his trial. Job sits on his dung heap and challenges both God and man. The vast majority of Europe's Jews simply evaporated into the air. Elie Wiesel can regard Job as a model for his anguish, because his sufferings were in truth a test for him. He has survived his ordeal with his faith deepened. One cannot liken those who were immediately executed to Job. They simply had neither time nor opportunity to come to terms with their experience. Even if in some way they knew that the death camps awaited them once incarcerated, the knowledge that certain death lay ahead was almost universally re-



pressed.<sup>20</sup> Somehow the facts were known yet not known. Those who went immediately to their death can be likened to Job's children but not to Job.

Nor can the Jewish people as a whole be likened to Job, who, incidentally, was often regarded as a righteous Gentile by both classical Jewish and Christian interpreters.<sup>21</sup> There is nothing in the relative comfort and safety which was common among the Jews of the Western hemisphere which justifies seeing anything Job-like in their World War II experience. *After* the event non-European Jews experienced an unprecedented trauma from which, I believe, they have yet to recover. Nevertheless, there was little that was Job-like in their experience at the time of Auschwitz.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTION

The group most likely to be seen as Job-like consists of those Jews who were compelled to adapt to the death camps, as, so to speak, their "normal" way of life. There was an adaptive process which made it possible for some people to survive for relatively long periods in the camps. The psychological reactions of the prisoners at Auschwitz have been studied extensively by a number of psychiatrists who were themselves inmates. Elie Cohen, Viktor Frankl, and Bruno Bettelheim are among the best-known former inmates who have undertaken psychiatric studies of what happened to individuals under camp conditions.<sup>22</sup> Elie Cohen has observed that survival in the camps depended upon the way in which the inmate passed through three psychological stages: initial

<sup>20</sup> Elie Cohen, *Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp*, trans. M. H. Braaksma (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1953), p. 119.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Nahum N. Glatzer, *The Dimensions of Job* (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 16-17, 24-34. Cf. Jean Daniélou, "The Mystery of Man and God" in Glatzer, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Cohen, *op. cit.*; Viktor Frankl, *From Death Camp to Existentialism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959) and Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).

reaction, adaptation, and resignation.<sup>23</sup> It must be remembered that the majority of the prisoners had neither the luck nor the inner resources to pass through all three stages. Anarchic misfortune could and usually did fall upon most inmates from the minute they arrived.

The prisoner who survived the "ceremony of reception" as he entered Auschwitz experienced an *acute depersonalization*. Cohen, Bettelheim, and others testify to the prevalence of the reaction. In the condition of acute depersonalization the individual does not believe that what is happening is really happening to him. This reaction was defensive and permitted the prisoner's ego to function at some level without breakdown. Cohen tells us: "I felt I did not belong, as if the business did not concern me; as if 'I were looking at things through a peephole.'" <sup>24</sup>

After a month or two in the camp, most prisoners understood that what was happening to them was very real. They had arrived at the second stage, *adaptation*. Success in remaining alive now depended upon how well the prisoners adapted to the routine of the camp-universe. Prisoners found themselves stripped of every shred of human dignity. Their names were never used; they were mere numbers. Their roles and identities outside the camp were of no consequence. Their appearance had changed so that many no longer bore much resemblance to the human beings they once were. They were addressed by the SS as *du* but were compelled to address the SS always as *Sie*. They were rigidly controlled so that they could perform no bodily function without permission of those who had the power of life and death over them. They were compelled to sleep inadequately covered in bunks with several bunkmates so that, as with Job, even sleep was no escape. Their food consisted of watery soup served in bowls which had to be used by several inmates without cleaning. Bed-wetting and diarrhea were common. It was impossible to attend to elementary requirements of bodily hygiene and cleanli-

<sup>23</sup> Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-210.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116

ness. Inmates were constantly in a state of ravenous hunger. In a word, the camps were deliberately arranged to destroy any last remnant of human dignity in the inmates. Regrettably, the Germans succeeded in this deliberately induced destruction of the person in practically every instance.

Among the most important adaptive reactions of the inmates to their predicament were *regression* and *identification with the aggressor*. It must be emphasized that without such defensive reactions survival would have been impossible. By regression I mean "reversion from a higher to a lower stage of development."<sup>25</sup> The psychological relationship of the inmates to the SS was like that of very small children to parents. Survival depended upon the arbitrary and unpredictable will of the SS. Aggression was deflected away from the enemy back to the self. There was an almost complete absence of hatred toward the SS. The SS had a godlike power of life and death. They could and did compel compliance with even the most arbitrary and indecent commands. All traces of the inmate's status as an adult in the real world had been obliterated. The psychological preoccupations of the inmates regressed from adult genital and interpersonal concerns to the oral and anal preoccupations of infancy. In the psychological world of the camps the SS had become a cruel but infinitely powerful father-image.

Anna Freud has observed that children often protect themselves from fear of attack by a mechanism she calls "*identification with the aggressor*." According to Miss Freud, "By impersonating the aggressor, assuming his attributes or imitating his aggression, the child transforms himself into the person making the threat."<sup>26</sup>

Reduced to an infantile level of emotional response, the camp inmates could only ward off anxiety by some measure of identification with those who were dedicated to degrading and annihilating them. The degree of identification varied.

<sup>25</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949), p. 287.

<sup>26</sup> Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (London: International Universities Press, 1946), pp. 118 ff.

Bruno Bettelheim tells of prisoners placing patches of SS uniforms on their prison uniforms.<sup>27</sup> The sadistic Kapos identified most completely with the SS. Apparently, practically all prisoners identified to some degree with their tormentors.

### RESIGNATION

The final stage was reached when the prisoner *resigned* himself to camp life and death. According to Bettelheim, "A prisoner had reached the final stage of adjustment to the camp situation when he had changed his personality so as to accept as his own the values of the Gestapo."<sup>28</sup> Few of the prisoners reached that stage completely. Those who did were usually Kapos or criminals. Some Jews among the Kapos exhibited an anti-Semitism too thoroughly imitative of the German model. H. O. Bluhm concluded that in the camps identification with the aggressor "was a means of defense of a rather paradoxical nature: survival through surrender; protection against the fear of the enemy—by becoming part of him; overcoming helplessness—by regressing to childish dependence."<sup>29</sup>

Unhappily, in the death camps the majority of inmates, with the exception of believing, religious Jews, were so totally degraded that little of their adult ego integrity remained intact. This is an important reason why Job fails as a model for understanding the camps theologically. Admittedly, there were Job-like survivors such as Wiesel, but those psychiatrists who have studied behavior in the camps and who possessed first-hand knowledge of their subject have concluded that most inmates were so totally assaulted both emotionally and physically that they were incapable of maintaining a sense of their own adult integrity and dignity. It is precisely this capacity which distinguishes Job in his trial before God and man.

<sup>27</sup> Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>28</sup> Bettelheim, "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. 38, no. 4 (October, 1943), p. 447.

<sup>29</sup> H. O. Bluhm, "How Did They Survive?" *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, vol. II, no. 1, 1948.

The Germans not only deprived their victims of their lives but stripped them of their last shred of dignity before administering the final *coup de grace*. This was a deliberate, purposeful policy toward men and women who were first dehumanized, then murdered with an insecticide, and finally disposed of through incineration as if they were so much refuse. The biblical authors of the book of Job portrayed the experience of radical misfortune as understood in their own time. Never in their worst nightmares could they have imagined a descent into hell so total yet so banal, rationalized, and bureaucratic as the twentieth-century death camp.<sup>30</sup> The experience of our times has exploded our ancient categories of the meaning and dimension of both human suffering and human evil. The biblical authors do not fail to offer us a meaningful model because they lacked wisdom. They were incapable of anticipating the technological revolution of the twentieth century. They were unable to foresee that one of technological civilization's supreme "achievements" in its precomputer stage would be an infinitely heightened capacity to degrade and dispose efficiently of mega-quantities of human beings with no significant reactions on the part of most camp personnel save the satisfaction of a job well done. To compare the death-camp experience with the experience of Job is only understandable as a defensive oversimplification. Unfortunately, such an oversimplification compromises our capacity to deal realistically with the demonic potentialities of contemporary technological civilization. World War II technology was but a crude anticipation of the incredible material and psychological efficiency of contemporary instrumentalities available for dehumanization and mass human waste disposal. The technology of human waste disposal has more than kept pace with the production of superfluous men we call overpopulation. The Germans have successfully demonstrated that mass human waste disposal is entirely practical and need have no adverse long-term reactions on its perpetrators. Incidentally,

<sup>30</sup> I find Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1951) still the best description of the rationalized, banalized procedure.

I see *no* evidence of any special German proclivity to evil which distinguishes them from the rest of mankind. Their only distinction was that they were able to apply the fruits of technological civilization in this area more effectively than has any other national community. There is no reason to believe that the next time either the aggressors or their victims will be the same. The most terrifying thing about the Germans is not how different but how very much like the rest of us they are. The twentieth century has crossed a radically novel threshold which biblical man in his simple wisdom never anticipated.

### *Inutility of the Image of Job*

I have suggested that biblical man objectified his conflicting impulses of intergenerational love and hostility in his images of God. Elsewhere I have sadly and reluctantly elaborated on the reasons why biblical man's objectifications, though profoundly rooted in human psychology, can no longer be valid for us.<sup>31</sup> Biblical man could envisage God as the divine Father because he regarded the cosmos, for all of its hazards, as a place in which man could ultimately be at home. We tend to regard both our immediate environment as well as the greater cosmos as the unresistant object of human mastery. The family in biblical times was ultimately envisaged as cosmic in scope. Beyond earthly patriarchs, biblical man envisaged an Arch-Patriarch whose love, power, and concern prevented any aspect of experience from being devoid of some measure of the warmth and nurture men meet within the familial hearth. Even God's punitive anger had elements of consolation in it. An angry God remained a caring God.

The problem of reconciling the biblical God with Auschwitz is not a contemporary expression of the perennial problem of God and radical human evil. Would that it were that simple. The very category of evil is meaningless in dealing with Auschwitz. As Hannah Arendt has pointed out, the kind

<sup>31</sup> Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

of banalized, bureaucratic decisions which made Auschwitz possible had far more in common with the day-to-day decisions of ordinary banks, corporations, and government bureaus than with the great satanic personalities of the past. Everybody simply followed orders and did his job. The web of complicity involved all of Germany. Was the postman guilty for delivering government forms which made classification of the victims possible? Was the Reichsbank clerk guilty who recorded the influx of newly acquired assets? Was the railroad employee guilty who made transport of the victims possible? All were doing their job for their country in wartime. Who was not doing his job? Is there such a thing as guilt in a rationalized bureaucracy? In the United States young people have been active in protest movements combating what they regard as the evil fruits of the American bureaucracy, but will they be quite so morally sensitive when they take their places within the system?

Auschwitz must be seen as one of the many potentialities of contemporary technological civilization. The real question is whether *any* image of God still makes sense in the psychedelic world of computers, media manipulation, rationalized bureaucracy, organ transplants, interplanetary exploration, and environmental spoliation. It is almost impossible for the contemporary artist to represent a human figure, much less divinity. If one refuses to listen to the poets, one has but to visit the great art internationals periodically held in Venice, São Paulo, and Pittsburgh to be assaulted by the transformation in sensibility. The art of the late twentieth century is the art of the technological world. One has only to compare its representative creators with those of earlier centuries to apprehend what an incredible alteration in cultural and religious sensibility has taken place. God is absent from contemporary art; not surprisingly, so too is man. I say this not by way of criticism of the artist, for he is a clairvoyant. The poets and the artists cannot help themselves. They must speak the truth. The world they describe is a world without God.

In conclusion, I should like very briefly to express my personal faith: I do not believe the world will long remain god-

less; Gods die; other Gods arise to take their place. If the poets and artists proclaim the absence of the old God, the musicians, those perennial heralds of new faith, proclaim the birth of a new God. As the world outside becomes ever more spoiled, sterile, and denatured, men have no alternative but inner space; they must find their humanity within themselves and each other. The very absurdity of our incredible outward reach has produced its predictable reaction. Already a rumor is heard that an old-new God is making his way among us. He cannot be found beyond the stars. He does not stand above the human drama in a mysterious righteousness which forever humbles men, as did the awesome God of Job. He does not annul suffering; he shares it. He is incarnate in human life, passion, bliss, and forgetfulness. He participates in both the agonies and the ecstasies of men more completely than did the Christian savior, who knew men's sufferings but not their joys. He has devotees among those who call themselves Jews and those who call themselves Christians. They require but a glance for mutual recognition. He has slumbered for centuries among the peoples of the Western world. Today he is reawakening wherever the sound of youth's music is heard. Dionysus is reborn among us.<sup>32</sup> He

<sup>32</sup> Norman O. Brown has done more to reassert the abiding relevance of the Dionysian consciousness than any other contemporary American thinker known to me. Cf. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York: Random House, 1966). My own expression of the continuing relevance of both the Dionysian and Apollonian consciousness is to be found in my *Morality and Eros* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970). I have read Sam Keen's *To a Dancing God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), and find in it a Dionysian consciousness similar to my own. Cf. Harvey Cox, *Feast of Fools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) for an attempt to synthesize the Dionysian and the biblical perspectives. The best work I know on the career of Dionysus as a god among the ancients is Walter F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965). However, no contemporary theologian for whom Dionysian consciousness has once again become a reality can fail to acknowledge his debt to the most seminal of all twentieth-century thinkers, who pursued his work before his time in the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche. Cf. especially his *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872).



cannot reign alone. He requires the opposing presence of his brother Apollo. Together they offer men something infinitely more precious than the illusory promise of salvation and the reality of Auschwitz; they offer men the certitudes of mortality, the delights and the searing pains of human abundance. Given the institutional structure and history of the Western religions, Dionysus and Apollo will take upon themselves Jewish and Christian guises. Nevertheless, they will outlast both the God of Moses and the God of Jesus.

## *VI: A Matter of Survival*

# Starting Points for an Ecological Theology: A Bibliographical Survey

*Kenneth P. Alpers*

The editors of *Dialog*\* devoted their Summer 1970 number largely to material dealing with the environmental crisis. Any of the articles in that special number would have been worthy of inclusion in this volume, but Kenneth P. Alpers' wide-ranging bibliographical survey seemed particularly useful—useful, that is, for anyone who wants to become knowledgeable about a problem so pervasive that it poses a threat to all life on this planet. Indeed, the ecological crisis is a matter of such urgency that, as Alpers says, “we do not have the luxury of leisurely theological reflection before we forge some kind of ethic” and act accordingly. In 1970 Alpers, an American Lutheran pastor, served on his denomination's Commission for Research and Social Action in a special assignment with emphasis on the environmental issue. He is the author of *God's Grace and My Need*. Alpers recently became senior pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Sumner, Iowa.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN science and theology have gone through many phases. There have been periods of aggression, of parasitism, of symbiosis. Recent negotiations seem to arise from the “territorial imperative”; as Ian Barbour has pointed out, neo-orthodoxy, existentialism, and linguistic analysis appear to agree at least in regarding religion and science as quite separate “language games,” with very little (though somehow stubbornly persistent) overlap. The concern has been with methodological issues rather than the content of the several sciences. This has perhaps been a therapy much needed.

There are strong indications, however, that a renewed

\* 5100 W. 82nd St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55431.

concern with the content of biological discoveries is once again confronting Christian theological and ethical thinking with new problems. Not since "Darwin's century" have the life sciences posed such problems. Indeed, the "new" issues emerge out of further development of issues implicit in *The Origin of Species*, but obscured by the fights over the "fact" of evolution, the chronology of the Bible, and the ancestry of man. The new issues arise from the knowledge explosion at the opposite ends of the biological spectrum: what might be called micro-biology and macro-biology, or molecular biology and ecology. In popular concern, these discoveries relate to the possibility of genetic manipulation of man, and to the crisis of the environment, popularly called pollution.

This bibliographic introduction will be limited to the now loud issue of environmental crisis. Ecology has become more than a hitherto rather obscure branch of biology; it has become a hot political issue, and a possible new symbol of the generation gap. It may become a fruitful new model for "doing" Christian theology and ethics.

The Earth Day celebrations of April 22, 1970 confront Christian theology with a twofold challenge: to develop an ethic of responsibility toward the natural environment, and to elaborate a theology of nature. While the former may be ultimately dependent logically on the latter, we do not have the luxury of leisurely theological reflection before we forge some kind of ethic. We have to act to save some threatened environment while it is possible and perhaps before we know all the reasons why. At least, in the theological divisions of labor, the author of this essay will begin with the ethical tasks.

### *Sounding the Alarm*

The crisis of the environment is today a hot issue of political, scientific, and popular concern. It has emerged as a new ethical issue alongside such things as Vietnam and race. It would be tragic to see it as an alternative concern, pushing the other issues to the background with a sigh of relief, try-

ing to co-opt the "movement." It, rather, opens another dimension to what man is doing to himself and his world. It would also be unfortunate to see it as a passing fad. The problem will not disappear, nor is concern about it a sudden emergence in our society. This is at least the third time it has reached political importance.

Two previous waves of concern in the United States were associated with the name Roosevelt. In 1908, Theodore Roosevelt called a Conference of Governors, saying, ". . . there is no question before the Nation of equal gravity with the question of the conservation of our natural resources." His concern led to the development of our forest and wildlife preserves. The next wave of concern came in early New Deal days under Franklin Roosevelt. The greatest land disaster in our history—the dust-bowl storms—aroused concern over soil conservation. Agency after agency was created to deal with the land, and the government commissioned Pare Lorentz to dramatize the problems in film documentaries such as "The Plow That Broke the Plains" and "The River." (Cf. Robert Synder, *Pare Lorentz and The Documentary Film* (U. of Oklahoma Press, 1968).

Following World War II, concern began to mount on the "Malthus" problem of overpopulation and erosion of agricultural resources. Two books highlighting this problem reached best-seller status: Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1948; reprinted by Pyramid paperbacks, 1968), and William Vogt's *Road to Survival* (New York: William Sloane, 1948).

The turning point in the mounting concern for the environment was perhaps the publication in 1962 of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, various paperback editions), which unmasked the ecological threats to our health and environment from the widely acclaimed new pesticides such as DDT. This book stirred enormous interest, partly because of Miss Carson's reputation as a writer, partly because of the violent reaction to it from agricultural and chemical interests, and mainly because the threats of "poisoning" hit so close to home: not only birds, but man

might be silenced. Miss Carson not only sounded an alarm, but provided an ecological framework of understanding that opened wider dimensions of the environmental problems. The story of the ensuing disputes and the eventual vindication of Miss Carson's concern is traced in Frank Graham's *Since Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970).

A quieter contribution to the mounting interest in our environment was Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall's *The Quiet Crisis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963). This book traced the history of the American relationship to the land and to its conservation, ending with a plea for a new "land ethic" (see, later, Aldo Leopold). A beautiful photographic and poetic expression of this same concern is the Sierra Club's *This Is the American Earth* (1960; now available in paperback from Ballantine Books, 1968).

From 1965 on, the tidal wave of publications on various forms of pollution gathered momentum. Probably the most explosive and widely read alarm call was Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine, 1968), which dramatized the now familiar statistical projections of the population explosion, spelled out some environmental consequences, and issued dramatic calls to action. With it, the issue of environmental crisis reached into the mass paperback market and the flood was on.

### *Broadening the Data Base*

A bibliographic essay cannot be complete, and in the current market is out of date quickly. But any dialogue of theology and ethics with environmental issues must be conducted on a broad base of data from many areas. It may be useful to list some starting points for investigation into a variety of fields.

The most frequently cited cause of a deteriorating environment is the pressure of too many people—the population bomb. The doubling rate of the earth's human population is now projected to be about thirty-five years. Once again we

are faced with the classic questions posed in 1798 by the Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus in his famous *Essay on the Principle of Population* (cf. Modern Library, 1960). How many people can we sustain without disaster?

Neo-Malthusians such as Paul Ehrlich argue that we are nearing disaster. William and Paul Paddock set it at *Famine—1975!* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), leaving only “America’s Decision: Who Will Survive?” Georg Borgstrom in *Too Many: A Study of the Earth’s Biological Limitations* (New York: Macmillan, 1969) argues that a doubling of the earth’s food production is needed to give everyone now living his minimum needs. What shall we do with a doubled population?

Anti-Malthusian arguments come traditionally from Marxists, Roman Catholics, and some technologists. Michel Cepede, François Houtart, and Linus Grond argue in *Population and Food* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964): “Instead of giving in to the sordid calculations of the despairing Malthusians, let us take heart, have faith in youth and the future, and remember that we are bidden to take dominion over the earth. Let us boldly envisage the prospect of a planet on which ten billion or more human beings shall live better than we live. . . .” Such a vision places trust in dramatic new scientific breakthroughs in food production. But food is only the subsistence question; how to provide quality of life for such a population burden, how to handle wastes and raw material supply, still staggers the imagination. R. Buckminster Fuller is one visionary not staggered by the prospects; see, among other writings, his *Utopia or Oblivion: The Prospects for Humanity* (New York: Bantam, 1969).

The majority of demographers bypass simple “pro or con Malthus” ideologies in favor of contextual analysis and searches for multiple solutions. A mass of data and analysis is provided in *The Population Dilemma*, edited by Philip Hauser (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), and in *The Population Crisis: Implications and Plans for Action*, edited by Larry Ng and Stuart Mudd (Bloomington, Ind.: U. of Indiana Press, 1965). A provocative one-author analy-

sis is Alfred Sauvy's *Fertility and Survival: Population Problems from Malthus to Mao Tse-Tung* (New York: Collier Paperback, 1962). *Our Crowded Planet*, edited by Fairfield Osborn (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1962) offers a wide selection of essays.

Population problems force upon us a wide variety of ethical and technical problems: how to make fertility control possible; how to achieve it without tyranny; how to produce and distribute food; how to redistribute population pressures; and agreeing on the goals of human life. Protestants can begin ethical analysis with Richard Fagley's *The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1960).

A second source of severe pressure on the environment comes from the rapid growth of human technology. There is some debate whether population or technology is the key problem, but it is hardly an either/or situation. In overpopulated countries, solutions are sought through increased agricultural and industrial technology, which may start new chains of problems. The United States may be able to support more people, though at increased cost to the environment; our problem is that as 7 per cent of the world's population, we use more than 50 per cent of the world's raw materials. Each American carries about him a "personal environment" of space, energy, and material demands on the natural environment greater than anywhere else in the world. Our technology has had devastating results on one of the world's most-blessed natural environments.

It would take us too far afield to try to list literature about technology. R. J. Forbes's *The Conquest of Nature: Technology and Its Consequences* (New York: Mentor, 1968) offers a short survey of the history and problems of technological growth. But attention must be given to the thesis of Barry Commoner in *Science and Survival* (New York: Viking, 1967). An ecologist featured on *Time's* February 2, 1970 cover, Commoner argues that dangerous flaws in the structure of science can lead to ecological disasters. One of the flaws is "separate but unequal" development of specializa-



tions—between the physical and life sciences, for example, and between newer molecular and the classical approaches to biological study of organisms. Commoner demonstrates that we have permitted vast physico-chemical interventions into the natural environment—such as atomic tests and DDT—that have turned out to be vast and poorly understood experiments on ourselves and the biotic environment, in which the results may not be in for years. Physical scientists projected “average” consequences based on random physical distribution of fallout, ignoring biological chains that concentrated results. Ethicists surely need to give as much attention to the ethical problems of using the whole biosphere as an experimental laboratory, as to the issues of potential human genetic manipulation. For it is now in our power to manipulate the whole as well as the microscopic.

The second basic flaw discussed by Commoner is society's manipulation of even basic scientific research. The sociological consequences of the way research is funded, and the threat to scientific integrity in secret military scientific research raise issues for broad public policy concern as well as for science. These questions suggest that the answer to pollution does not lie only in new scientific and technological advances (though they are needed), for the basic flaws in scientific research and in society's utilization of research may continue to exist.

There is a wide range of sources for understanding the facts of the pollution situation. A popular paperback overview is Robert and Leona Train Rienow's *Moment in the Sun: A Report on the Deteriorating Quality of the American Environment* (New York: Ballantine, 1969). Other good recent overviews are *Our Precarious Habitat: An Integrated Approach to Understanding Man's Effect on His Environment* by Melvin A. Bernarde (New York: Norton, 1970), and Ron Linton's *Terricide—America's Destruction of Her Living Environment* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970).

Air and water pollution arouse greatest popular concern today. Gerald Leinwand's *Air and Water Pollution* (New York: Washington Square, 1969) is a primer. Donald Carr

covered the subject in two popular books: *The Breath of Life* (1965) and *Death of the Sweet Waters* (1966), published by Norton. Edelson and Warshofsky's *Poisons in the Air* (New York: Pocket Books, 1966) is hard-hitting. The politics of water-pollution control can be studied through case histories in Frank Graham's *Disaster by Default* (New York: Evans, 1966) and in the League of Women Voter's handbook; *The Big Water Fight* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Greene, 1966). Growing interest in utilization and preservation of the ocean can be explored in Wesley Marx's *The Frail Ocean* (New York: Ballantine, 1969).

Air and water pollution can be controlled, though the political and economic issues involved may force vast alterations in the traditional American life-style. Land utilization, however, may be a more basic issue, since the various forms of polluting the land are more nearly irreversible. It is harder to get a handle on the issues involved. Three "slashing broadsides" are George Laycock's *The Diligent Destroyers*: "A critical look at the industries and agencies that are permanently defacing the American landscape" (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970); Gene Marine's *America the Raped*: "The engineering mentality and the devastation of a continent" (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969); and A. Q. Mowbray's *The Road to Ruin*: "A critical view of the federal highway program" (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1969). In the same tradition, but focusing on aesthetics, is Peter Blake's *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964). Approaches to effective planning to renew our human environment are Edmund K. Faltermeyer's *Redoing America: A Nationwide Report on How to Make Our Cities and Suburbs Livable* (New York: Collier Books, 1969), and William H. Whyte's *The Last Landscape* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1970), whose thesis is that we can have both density and quality.

Surveys of available physical resources and raw materials may be found in Hans Landsberg's *Natural Resources for U.S. Growth: A Look Ahead to the Year 2000* (Baltimore:

Johns Hopkins, 1964) and Harrison Brown's *The Challenge of Man's Future* (New York: Viking, 1954), which has a very useful bibliography.

A dedicated minority of Americans has long been interested in preserving wilderness areas. *Voices for the Wilderness*, edited by William Schwartz from key papers of the Sierra Club Wilderness Conferences (New York: Ballantine, 1969) provides a variety of perspectives; Raymond Dasmann surveys the world situation in *The Last Horizon* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), and Justice William O. Douglas has written *A Wilderness Bill of Rights* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965). Preserving wilderness is not high on the practical priorities of most people; precisely for that reason it is a key to exploring more fundamental issues in man's relationship to nature. Beyond the arguments for maintaining wild laboratories and genetic banks for unknown future benefit, the heart of the question seems to be: What is the value of wild nature as such for human well-being? Does the experience of wilderness (or even—for most of us—the knowledge that it is there) minister to something fundamental in man's makeup in a healing way? The current camping explosion seems a positive testimony—as well as a practical threat to continued wilderness! Or is this only for a minority of “nature nuts” and mystics?

The preservation of wildlife is a related issue. The definitive popular inventory of endangered species is the beautiful book edited by James Fisher, Noel Simon, and Jack Vincent, *Wildlife in Danger* (New York: Viking, 1969), based on the Red Data Book of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's own “Domesday Book” is summarized by George Laycock in *America's Endangered Wildlife* (New York: Norton, 1969). In the preface to *Wildlife in Danger*, Joseph Wood Krutch (whose own writings are well worth studying) quotes William Morton Wheeler's famous tribute to animals: “That, apart from the members of our own species, they are our only companions in an infinite and unsympathetic waste of electrons, planets, nebulae, and stars, is a

perennial joy and consolation." The book itself, unfortunately, is a testimony to man's lack of reverence for life.

There is growing interest in "noise pollution." John Gabriel Navarra provides a sound introduction to problems and cures in *Our Noisy World* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969); William Burns offers more technical treatment in *Noise and Man* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1969). William A. Shurcliff's *S/ST and Sonic Boom Handbook* outlines the threat from that source.

Two contrasting approaches to the strategies for cleaning up the environment may be discerned. One focuses on economic, technical, and political processes available to the "establishment"—pragmatic, evolutionary change through "channels." Here may be placed *Controlling Pollution: The Economics of a Cleaner America*, edited by Marshall Goldman (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967); the various publications of Resources for the Future, Inc., published by Johns Hopkins Press; and *Fortune's* special February 1970 issue, reprinted as *The Environment—A National Mission for the 70's* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). The articles in *Daedalus* for Fall 1967 ("America's Changing Environment") and the articles in *Saturday Review's* monthly section on Environment usually reflect this approach.

The other approach conceives of itself as more radical, oriented to fundamental revolution of our economic system and life-styles. Instead of seeing the war against pollution as an issue that will pull together all kinds of divergent ideologies and interests in a common crusade, it believes that "ecology" will become profoundly divisive as it challenges established ways. It offers a crusade calling for personal ideological conversion, new life-styles, participation in demonstrations, and anticorporation polemics. This approach is usually dominant in the special "environment" issues of *The Progressive* (April 1970), *Ramparts* (May 1970), *motive* (April/May 1970), and most obviously in the new monthly publication, *Earth-Times*.

It was a strong element in the college teach-ins on Earth Day, April 22, 1970, as reflected in handbooks prepared for

that day: *The Environmental Handbook*, edited by Garrett de Bell (New York: Ballantine, 1970) and *Ecotactics*, edited by John G. Mitchell (New York: Pocket Books, 1970): both are valuable collections of reference material and suggestions for action. The new life-style being sought is not simply a naïve back-to-nature movement; it could perhaps be described as a "romanticism informed by technology." The best clue to it can be found by studying the *Whole Earth Catalog* published by the Portola Institute of Menlo Park, California (\$4). The catalog is a provocative if offbeat source for developing a new theology of nature.

As a result of this more radical kind of approach, the whole "ecology" movement has already been denounced by the Daughters of the American Revolution and by the magazine *Human Events* (April 4, 1970) as subversive. One can expect the backlash to spread.

It may appear fence-straddling to say that both approaches have valuable contributions to make. The conflict is representative of the more general conflict between two current approaches to social change: the "political realism" approach (cf. Reinhold Niebuhr) and the "radical" or "revolutionary" approach (for example, Michael Novak). I probably reveal my own theological generation by an instinctive preference for "political realism." May not a radical ideological crusade for personal conversion and purity ironically postpone needed immediate action? If further technological and scientific advance is not a sufficient cause for environmental health, may it not be a necessary one? (René Dubos has pointed out that 70 per cent of air contaminants haven't even been identified; how can we clean up the air without further research?)

People who have the vocational opportunity to work with current political, industrial, and scientific structures should start where they can. On the other hand, the long-range outcome may be closer to the radical than to the pragmatic vision, and massive social-change movements cannot afford to ignore visionary and radical critiques. Some people can be motivated pragmatically, but are restive with ideology. Others need an ideology or crusade, but become impatient

with practicalities. I do not see how we shall succeed in transforming our environment toward something more healthy if both types do not forge a working alliance.

The references in this section are open to the charge of concentrating more on popular books—some of which belong to the “muck-raking” tradition—than on governmental and technical literature. Such reports as *A Strategy for a Liveable Environment*, *Restoring the Quality of Our Environment*, and *From Sea to Shining Sea*, available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, provide extensive bibliographic references. Indices to *Science*, *Scientific American*, and *Bio-science* will uncover more technical scientific research reports.

### *Developing an Ecological Perspective*

Throughout the literature, “ecology” serves as a unifying principle. Ecology is a scientific discipline; it has become a political cause; it is suggested as a model for philosophizing and theologizing.

Scientifically, ecology has been defined as the study of organisms in their mutual relationships with their environment. The word derives from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning *household*. (This derivation is enough to set sociologists to brainstorming with the word *economics*, and theologians into comparisons with *stewardship* and *ecumenics*.) Historically, ecology developed from natural history. Natural history was a more descriptive study of nature which laid the groundwork for classification and for organizing hypotheses such as evolution. As the data and hypotheses became increasingly susceptible to more experimental techniques, natural history evolved into such disciplines as ecology and ethology, which might be called the sociology and psychology of nature. (The growing literature on ethology or animal behavior will, I am sure, become a new issue for theology). Early ecologists could be found backpacking, like F. Fraser Darling, into the hills to study deer populations; today they can be found increasingly huddled, like Kenneth Watt, around IBM computers, talking

in rarefied mathematical languages. The amateur can contribute to natural history; the ecologist today must be a multi-discipline scientist.

Yet a lay knowledge of ecology may today be essential to dialogue about human survival. Some good introductions have been offered: John Storer's *The Web of Life* (New York: Signet Books, 1953); Marston Bates's *The Forest and the Sea: A Look at the Economy of Nature and the Ecology of Man* (New York: Mentor Books, 1961); Peter Farb's *Ecology* (New York: Time, Inc., 1963); Leslie Reid's *The Sociology of Nature* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1962); and especially Paul Sears's *The Living Landscape* (New York: Basic Books, 1966).

At least one textbook should be studied for more technical language and concepts. Two widely used shorter ones are *Ecology*, by Eugene Odum (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963) and *Concepts of Ecology* by Edward Kormondy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969). There are a number of bigger textbooks, but these will provide enough to chew on.

These listings in ecology will give the impression of man surveying the "lower" orders of nature, and occasionally drawing implications for his own life. The next step to the concept of a human ecology is a natural one, and an attractive one to theologians becoming impatient with descriptions of biomes. But such a proposed science encounters enormous territorial and definitional problems; what we have so far are some preliminary probes and surveys from various disciplinary perspectives. Marston Bates's *Man in Nature* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961) gives a biological view; René Dubos' *Man, Medicine, and Environment* (New York: Mentor, 1968) has a bio-medical perspective; John Storer's *Man in the Web of Life: Civilization, Science and Natural Law* (New York: Mentor, 1968) is described on the cover as the "everything book"—which is its virtue and defect.

A pioneering classic in human ecology was written in 1874 by George Perkins Marsh (cf. his story in Udall's *Quiet Crisis*) entitled *The Earth as Modified by Human Action* (reprinted

as *Man and Nature* by Harvard U. Press, 1965). This massive historical survey of man's impact on nature is still worth studying. To bring it up to date in 1955 required the contributions of over fifty world authorities in an International Symposium for Anthropological Research. William Thomas edited, and the University of Chicago Press published, these papers and comments in a 1200-page book entitled *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* (1956). It is an overwhelming book. Philip Wagner's *The Human Use of the Earth* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964 paperback), on the other hand, is a concise and tightly written "examination of the interaction between man and his physical environment" by a geographer. The American parallel to Thomas' reference work is *Future Environments of North America: Transformation of a Continent*, edited by F. Fraser Darling and John P. Milton (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1966).

This may also be the place to mention several heterogeneous collections of essays. Harold Helfrich edited *The Environmental Crisis: Man's Struggle to Live with Himself* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1970), in which Ian McHarg and George Glacken provide interesting comments on religious perspectives. The Smithsonian Annual II, *The Fitness of Man's Environment* (1968), provides perspectives especially on urban environment. The most provocative collection is *The Subversive Science—Essays Toward an Ecology of Man*, edited by Paul Shepard and Daniel McKinley (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969). Especially the last section, "Ethos, Ecos, and Ethics," will stimulate many theological reflections.

Whatever popular esteem ecology now enjoys, it is clear on careful examination that it is not yet a science that can provide a set of rules to manage the whole environment. What emerges from it is a context for ethical reflection and decision that can be called "the ecological perspective." It contains the following items:

A. Ecology provides an awareness of limits. It has become clear that the resources of earth are limited, and subject often to very delicate balances. Man has demonstrated his ability to make massive interventions into the whole



environment. These interventions have often created irreversible changes—such as species extinction. Further, the capacity of the environment to act as a sink for our wastes, to absorb and recycle them so they do not accumulate as pollution, is limited. We have obviously been transgressing on those limits, and must learn to live with them.

Kenneth Boulding (*Human Values on the Space-ship Earth*, National Council of Churches, 1966) has pointed out that these limits mean we must abandon flat-earth, unlimited-horizon economics. We must treat our earth as a small space-ship, and develop life-support systems based on recycling. These limits will require control of population growth, careful evaluation of all technical interventions, and a return to craftsmanship and reuse rather than throw-away economics. Garbage may be the pretext for the next economic revolution. But imposing limits on human activity creates enormous problems with human freedom.

B. Ecology fosters understandings of dynamics and change. The ecological concept of a mature ecosystem (sum total of living and nonliving parts supporting a chain of life in a selected area) is often misinterpreted as a static one. But every ecosystem, even a mature one, is subject to constant change, and a human "spaceship" ecosystem need not be a static totalitarianism.

Ecology has profoundly modified the conservation movement. Conservation can no longer be simply an attempt to preserve the status quo; wastes and pesticides, for example, are no respecters of "wilderness preserves" or "saved status" for organisms. Conservation must involve efforts to maintain ecological balances in constantly changing situations. Some good introductions to the "new" conservation are David Ehrenfeld's *Biological Conservation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), and Raymond Dasman's *Environmental Conservation* (New York: John Wiley, 1968).

Human urban and rural planning must also become informed by the natural dynamics uncovered by ecology. The formal garden and the North American land survey system represent classic symbols of nonecological planning. A pro-

vocative approach to ecological designing can be found in Ian L. McHarg's *Design with Nature* (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1969).

C. Ecology is based on a concept of interdependence, of the "web" of life. The earth's environment is no respecter of nationalism, provincialism, rugged individualism. All human arrangements must be seen as symbiotic, mutually supportive ones. Political boundary lines—geographic and institutional—must be rethought in the effort to control and preserve our environment. Industries cannot continue to ignore what are sometimes called "hidden social benefits and costs"—e.g., their effluents must become theirs and not nature's problem.

D. Ecology—on the other hand—also supports the development of diversity. Ian McHarg has suggested the following value scheme as an ecological one:

Unfit (disease)—simplicity, uniformity, instability, independence

Fit (health)—complexity, diversity, stability, interdependence

There are several surprises here. In natural ecosystems, the mature, stable, healthy ones are complex and diverse. We popularly view our human civilization as an increasingly complex one; from the ecological viewpoint, it is, in fact, enormously and dangerously oversimplifying the natural environment. One-crop agriculture, urbanization, chemical control of pests, etc., are all examples of reducing natural diversity, and with it natural stability. To apply simplistic technological solutions to the resulting problems creates a vicious circle. We need a whole new approach to living "with" rather than "on" the land, to husbandry rather than exploitation. The analogies to the creation and preservation of diversity in the human ecosystem need to be explored. Raymond Dasmann's *A Different Kind of Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1968) is a plea to promote diversity in human environments and to respect diversity in natural environments as a basis for true quality of life.

## *Toward an Ecological Theology and Ethics*

The references so far listed are far more likely to be found in a public library than in a theological one. This reflects my conviction that the development of an adequate theological response to current environmental issues will not be found by beginning with deductions from Christian sources and dogmas, but by first looking at the complex nature of the environment itself. Unless we are listening, we will not be heard.

As we listen, we hear sharp attacks on Christian faith as a contributor to environmental crisis. Ian McHarg (*Design with Nature*) assails what he regards as Jewish and Christian views that nature is a mere backdrop to human ethical struggles. In a more careful analysis entitled "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (*Science*, 155: 1203-1207, 1967; reprinted in *Environmental Handbook* and *The Subversive Science*), historian Lynn White, Jr., concludes: "Both our present science and our present technology are so tainted with orthodox Christian arrogance toward nature that no solution for our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone. Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious. . . . We must rethink and refeel our nature and destiny" (p. 1207). White, a Christian, proposes beginning with St. Francis. The younger self-styled "eco-freaks" usually prefer Zen or Tao.

Christians can react by pointing to more positive readings of the Scriptures in C. F. D. Moule's monograph, *Man and Nature in the New Testament: Some Reflections on Biblical Ecology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Facet Books, 1967) and Eric Rust's *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought* (London: Lutterworth, 1953). One-sided polemics about Christian rejection of nature need correction through a reading of George Williams' *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

Yet the fact remains that there is a profound ambiguity in Christian and Western thought about the relationship of man

and nature. Any honest reading will become a massive *Sic et Non*. Our own American ambiguity about the wilderness we conquered is a fascinating study, offering starting points for reading back to earlier influences. The bibliographic essay in Roderick Nash's impressive *Wilderness and the American Mind* is an open door not only to American studies, but to the more sketchy literature about Western man's relationship to nature. To it should be added a strange and intriguing book by Paul Shepard, *Man in the Landscape: A Historic View of the Esthetics of Nature* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1967). Students of philosophy will already be aware of R. G. Collingwood's *The Idea of Nature* (New York: Oxford, 1945) and Arthur O. Lovejoy's monumental *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper & Row, 1936).

Nevertheless, the most influential calls today for a renewed dialogue between religion and the environmental sciences have come from outside the theological circle. *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* is a strange title for "sacred scripture," but wildlife management expert Aldo Leopold's book (New York: Oxford, 1949, 1968) has acquired that status in the conservation movement. The concluding essays are a powerful call for a "land ethic" and an "ecological conscience." Conservation will not be serious business, he notes, until it has become a concern for philosophy and theology.

A forceful challenge to the social sciences to concern themselves with the values of nature comes from Richard Means in *The Ethical Imperative* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969): "Our use and misuse of nature must be torn out of the context of simple economic discussion and placed firmly in the province of social and ethical values" (p. 135).

The best-known religious effort to create a nature-ethic in our day has been Albert Schweitzer's philosophy of reverence for life. Believing that the great fault of all previous ethics was their limitation to human life, Schweitzer called for reverence for everything living. This remains the most impressive effort to involve all life in ethics. It has suffered,

however, from two limitations. First, Schweitzer's own understanding of wildlife is almost hopelessly bourgeois European, and ecologically naïve. Second, his ethic of reverence for life is imbedded in a dualistic life philosophy stressing the opposition of spirit and nature, will and reason, and leading to a romantic and naïve individualism. Henry Clark's sympathetic but critical study, *The Ethical Mysticism of Albert Schweitzer* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962) suggests ways of correcting these defects through influences from Paul Tillich and Alfred North Whitehead (Tillich is one of the few recent theologians with a real appreciation of nature; however, few studies of Tillich have paid much attention to this aspect of his thought).

A renewed call for a theology of nature is beginning to be heard from Christian theologians. *Dialog's* Autumn 1964 issue on "Creation and Redemption" includes an eloquent plea for renewed concern with nature from Joseph Sittler (cf. also his "A Theology for Earth" in *The Christian Scholar*, 37/3, September 1954). Harold Ditmanson's "The Call for a Theology of Creation" canvassed Lutheran fears of natural theology, and offered instead a theology of creation that begins with revelation instead of nature, and seeks not to prove God from nature but to relate God's revelatory activity to nature.

The development of a theology for nature must grapple not only with Protestant antipathy to natural theology, but also with the prevailing methodological concordat between science and religion which places them in separate language games. Ian G. Barbour offers a carefully balanced analysis of the problems in *Issues in Science and Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), and also in the essays he edited for *Science and Religion: New Perspectives on the Dialogue* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). One option that is attracting a following is Whitehead's process philosophy. While I do not feel competent to survey that literature, attention should be called to the work of Eric Rust in *Science and Faith* (New York: Oxford, 1967) and *Evolutionary Philosophies and Contemporary Theology* (Philadelphia:

Westminster, 1969), and to the Australian biologist L. Charles Birch's *Nature and God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965).

Conrad Bonifazi in *A Theology of Things* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967) drew upon a wide reading in Christian tradition and Western literature to show the significance of matter in the Christian view. His work is discursive and suggestive, rather than definitive, but can serve as "prolegomena to any future theology of matter."

The most recent effort to advance a theology of nature is Frederick Elder's *Crisis in Eden: A Religious Study of Man and Environment* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970). Believing that the ecological crisis has resulted because man acts as if he is unique in the biological realm, Elder offers an alternative between inclusivist and exclusivist positions. Loren Eiseley is used as the spokesman for a number of ecologists and evolutionists (evolution is, after all, historical ecology) who view man as an integral part of the web of nature. This position he terms biocentric. Over against this is a strong Christian tradition of exclusivist or anthropocentric thought which separates and elevates man from the natural world. As modern exemplars of exclusivism, Elder cites Teilhard de Chardin, Harvey Cox, and Herbert Richardson.

This typology is helpful in pointing up the question of whether man must relate himself to the natural ecology or can create his own independent ecosystem. But efforts to push the distinction further create difficulties. While the inclusivist position is favored as a Christian option, Elder does not demonstrate how it should be developed beyond the kind of evolutionary naturalism, tinged with numinous experiences, that is presented in Eiseley or other biologists. And placing Teilhard in the exclusivist camp with Cox and Richardson raises problems. Undoubtedly Teilhard's "focusing on man" and his terminology such as "hominization of nature" in *The Phenomenon of Man* can be read as parallels to Cox's secular city or Richardson's systems theology. But at the same time I believe he has attained such a popular following because he did place man integrally in the evolutionary process. His vision of the future is poetic and impres-

cise; it is open to judgment whether he intends a wholly human environment technologically or is groping for a larger vision inclusive of nature. Perhaps Teilhard could be termed a "verticalist," along with Julian Huxley and some other biologists, who treat man as an emergent within evolution, but offer new possibilities that are distinctive to man. This could be a new category alongside inclusivists and more narrowly defined exclusivists. At any rate, I believe we must continue to explore a wider range of typologies.

Elder has suggested an affinity to the theology of H. Richard Niebuhr in his own suggestions for further theological development of his theme (p. 99). It is my own conviction that Richard Niebuhr's theology indeed offers the most fruitful approach. His ethical concept of response to the fitting (*The Responsible Self*, New York: Harper & Row, 1963) is inherently ecological. It can widen the door to understanding both the "good" and the "right" in broader than merely human terms. Niebuhr's radical monotheism and his value system of relationism around a center of value go beyond anthropocentrism and biocentrism to make possible a truly theocentric reading of the intricate relationships of God, man, and nature (cf. *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture*, New York: Harper & Row, 1960). Along these lines Christians may yet contribute a relevant theological and ethical voice toward the solving of man's relationship to his environment.

# *New Theology No. 1*

## Introducing New Theology

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*John Macquarrie*

Who Is Heinrich Ott?

*Robert Clyde Johnson*

The Relation of Scripture, Church Tradition and Modern Interpretation

*Eduard Schweizer*

Revelation Through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology

*James Barr*

Church History Explained

*Sidney E. Mead*

The Reformation in Recent Roman Catholic Theology

*Per Erik Persson*

Thoughts on the Second Vatican Council

*Karl Barth*

A Note on Imagination and Thought about God

*Thomas Gornall, S.J.*

### II: PROBLEMS FOR THEOLOGY

Can Faith Validate God-Talk?

*Kai Nielsen*

Nirvana and Kingdom of God

*Thomas J. J. Altizer*

From the Church to the World

*J. M. Lochman*

### III: THEOLOGY IN EXTENSION

The Worship of the Church and the Modern Man

*E. S. Brown, Jr.*

Franz Kafka and the God of Israel

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Christianity and the Supernatural

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## *New Theology No. 2*

### Introduction

#### I: THE PROBLEM OF GOD AND THE GODLESS

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The Theology of True Secularity

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